



# In Every Tongue

**TWR's Advent Prayer Guide 2022**



# In Every Tongue

The word “Advent” is derived from the Latin word “adventus,” which means coming.

We associate it with the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ as a baby, in the manger at Bethlehem, and rightly so. But at least since the sixth century, Christians have observed Advent in connection with the second coming of Christ, when he will come on a white horse (Revelation 19:11), and, “He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, or crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.” (Revelation 21:4)

Jesus foretold that his gospel would be proclaimed to all nations (Matthew 24:14). His prophecy is displayed vividly in Revelation 5, in which the elders are gathered around the Lamb’s throne, singing that Jesus has ransomed by his blood people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. Some translations use the word “tongue” rather than the word “language.”

TWR is called to reach the world for Christ by mass media so that lasting fruit is produced. We don’t mean reaching the world in a vague, generic sense. We want to be a part of reaching every people group, every tongue. That’s why we’re constantly striving to increase the number of languages in which our content can be heard. Currently, we’re at more than 320 tongues.

In this Advent season, we’d like to introduce you to a few of these languages in each of four regions. Each day from Monday through Saturday, we’ll introduce you to one of the languages spoken in that region. We’ll tell you a little about the people who speak it and where they live.

Come, journey with us as we eagerly await the coming of our King.

They sang a  
new song, saying,  
“Worthy are You to  
take the book and  
to break its seals;  
for You were slain,  
and purchased  
for God with Your  
blood men from  
every tribe and  
tongue and people  
and nation.”

- Revelation 5:9



# Asia

## Reflection

The Advent story begins with a man who had no "tongue" with which to speak. When Zechariah expressed doubt that he and Elizabeth could be anybody's mom and dad, the angel Gabriel took Zechariah's speech away.

It was only when the baby was born and Zechariah wrote the boy's name on a slate that he was given back his speech.

And, oh, what a speech he gave. This child would be called a prophet. This child would grow up to prepare the way for the Messiah. He would give light "to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death."

Years later, that child, a grown man who "was clothed with camel's hair and wore a leather belt around his waist" (Mark 1:6), would indeed point to the Messiah. "Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" John said. "This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me.' I myself did not know him, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel" (John 1:29-31).

But when John was alone, languishing in a prison cell, doubts may have set in. He sent his disciples to Jesus with a plaintive question: "Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?"

Jesus answered by pointing to the evidence: The blind saw, the lame walked, lepers were cleansed, the deaf heard, the dead were raised to life and good news was being preached to the poor. Light had come into the world (Matthew 11:2-6)!

The light remains in the world today, appearing to Japanese speakers in the bustling cities of that great nation, to Sinhalese speakers on the troubled island of Sri Lanka, to Dari speakers in Afghanistan. Using multiple media, TWR speaks truth in over 175 languages across the great continent of Asia. As the words of truth are heard, the darkness is overcome. The shadow of death vanishes into the light.

## Listener Story

"I am a very newly born-again Christian since 2021. I came to know about Christ and Christianity only through TWR radio programs. ... I believe and pray that God may touch millions of souls. ... I know that there are many people around me willing to hear about the life of Jesus Christ." – *Listener in Nepal*

## Scripture

"And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, to give knowledge of salvation to his people in the forgiveness of their sins."

– LUKE 1:76,77

## Prayer

Lord God, as our friend in Nepal prayed, may you touch millions of souls. We thank you that you came to give us knowledge of your salvation and the forgiveness of sins. **AMEN**



# Nov. 28 Japanese

## Language

### Japanese

The Japanese language is spoken by about 120 million inhabitants of Japan as well as by Japanese people living in Hawaii and on the North and South American mainlands, according to Shigeru Miyagawa of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Traditional Japanese is written vertically, with the lines starting from the right side of the page. It uses either Chinese characters or syllabary, which is a set of written symbols.

## People

Despite religious freedom, Japan is home to the second-largest unreached people group in the world. Less than 1% of its nearly 126 million people are evangelical believers.

Most Japanese are indifferent toward Christianity and, to some extent, religion as a whole. Several barriers inhibit the growth of Christianity in Japan. Shinto is the native religion of Japan and has historically been closely tied to many aspects of Japanese culture, and many practices such as household shrines and festivals continue to be observed today.

## Prayer Focus

- Pray for the impact of TWR's Japanese programs to women (*Women of Hope*) and men (*Every Man A Warrior*). Ask God to break through strongholds erected against the gospel and reach deep into the hearts of Japanese listeners during this time of Advent.
- Pray for church teams coming to Japan from Singapore and elsewhere to help distribute invitations to connect with programs such as *Truth in the Test Tube* and *The Friendship Hour*.



# Nov. 29 Sinhala

## Language

### Sinhala

Sinhala, also called Sinhalese or Singhalese, is a member of the Indo-European language family. It is an official language of Sri Lanka, as well as the native tongue of the Sinhalese people, the largest ethnic group in the island nation. There are over 16 million native speakers of Sinhala, and about 4 million who speak it as a second language.

Modern Sinhala uses a syllabic script. Each consonant has an inherent vowel, which can be altered using diacritics (or vowel strokes) that appear either above, below, before or after the consonant they belong to.

## People

The main ethnic groups of Sri Lanka are the Sinhalese and Tamils. Buddhism is the predominant religion.

## Prayer Focus

- Pray for the leadership of Sri Lanka to find peace that only comes through believing in the Christ child. Pray for a return to safety and for bountiful provision to be restored in a suffering economy.
- Pray for pastors and believers to be strong in the face of opposition from neighbors and friends. Pray that the program *The Word Today* will clearly reveal to the listener who the child of Christmas truly is to the seeking heart.

# Nov. 30 Ilocano

## Language

### Ilocano

An Austronesian language, Ilocano is most widely used in northwestern Luzon Island where the Ilocano people live. Its vocabulary contains loan words from English, Spanish, Sanskrit and other languages.

Of the approximate 9.31% of Filipinos that speak Ilocano, over 7.7 million are first language speakers. This makes the Ilocano language the third-most-spoken native language in the Philippines.

## People

The Ilocano people are the third-largest Filipino ethnolinguistic group. Most Ilocanos are Roman Catholics.

## Prayer Focus

- Pray for TWR staff who connect with Ilocano program listeners to provide loving, caring counsel. Ask God for understanding wisdom as they respond to letters, phone calls and social media posts, which often contain heartbreaking stories.
- Pray for the message of the love of Jesus to clearly connect with people who listen to the Ilocano *Thru the Bible* programs.



# Dec. 1 Mandarin Chinese

## Language

### Mandarin Chinese

With more than a billion speakers, Mandarin Chinese is the second-most widely spoken language in the world. The national language of China boasts the largest number of native speakers, most of whom reside in mainland China, Taiwan, Malaysia and Singapore. Outside of Asia, Mandarin is commonly used among Chinese communities across the U.S., South Africa, Nicaragua and elsewhere.

## People

The world's most populous country, China is home to roughly 20% of the global population. Yet about 80% of its 545 people groups still have not heard about Jesus, according to Joshua Project.

On Open Doors' 2022 World Watch List, which identifies the top 50 countries where it's most difficult to follow Jesus, China sits at No. 17. Several religious laws and calls by authorities to adapt religions to socialist society have created unprecedented challenges for missionaries in certain parts of the country. Some believers also have a difficult time securing Christian books and resources

## Prayer Focus

- Pray for ethnic Chinese living outside China, many of whom feel displaced, to find hope in the Christ of Christmas as they listen to messages of hope in their heart language on foreign soil.
- Praise God for co-workers engaging people and distributing media on the ground to Mandarin-speaking Chinese. May the Lord provide and lead more people like them to partner with TWR – reaching and building up Chinese believers.



# Dec. 2 Dari

## Language

### Dari

The Dari language is one of two official languages of Afghanistan. For many years, it has served as the lingua franca among different language communities. About half of the population are native Dari speakers, most of them belonging to the Tajik ethnic group. Dari is also spoken in Iran, Pakistan and neighboring regions.

Dari uses a modified Arabic script, known as Perso-Arabic. It has 32 letters, eight vowels and 24 consonants.

## People

On Open Doors' 2022 World Watch List, Afghanistan sits at the very top. Persecution of Christians is rife, and many local believers have been driven underground.

## Prayer Focus

- Pray for Dari-speaking believers to find safety in Jesus despite persecution. Pray for the *Dari Women of Hope* programs to impress upon the hearts of the listeners that God loves and cares for them.
- Ask the Lord to surround TWR South Asia's leaders with wisdom so they clearly know the best ways to reach the hearts of persecuted people.





# Dec. 3 Tok Pisin

## Language

### Tok Pisin

Commonly known in the English-speaking world as “Pidgin,” Tok Pisin is an English-based creole language spoken throughout Papua New Guinea. It is an official language and the most widely used one in the country, having an estimated 3 million to 5 million speakers.

Much of Tok Pisin's vocabulary comes from English. However, they often differ in spelling, pronunciation and meaning. Other languages that have influenced Tok Pisin over the years include German, Portuguese, Indonesian and Malay.

In Tok Pisin, “King of Kings” could be written “King bilong olgeta king.”

## People

Over 85% of Papua New Guinea's population lives in isolated communities. The country is also one of the most diverse, with some 9 million inhabitants speaking about 860 languages. Although Christianity is the predominant religion, many adherents lack foundational knowledge about salvation.

## Prayer Focus

- Pray that God's message of love and hope in the Tok Pisin radio program *Hope with God* clearly brings the listeners knowledge and understanding of salvation.
- Pray for Tok Pisin believers to find strength in Jesus, enabling them to speak the words of truth to their neighbors and friends.



# Africa

## Reflection

Advent came to Mary in the form of the angel Gabriel.

The Bible tells us that she was a virgin, so this was a shocking proclamation even though it had been foretold by the prophet (Isaiah 7:14). The Bible doesn't tell us how old she was, but it's generally assumed – based on the customs of the time – that she was a teenager. She may have been 16 or even younger.

Small wonder that when Gabriel greeted her as “O favored one,” she was “greatly troubled.” This was before he told Mary that she would have a son who would “be called the Son of the Most High” and “of his kingdom there will be no end.”

Mary asked a perfectly reasonable question: “How will this be, since I am a virgin?”

Gabriel gave a perfectly unreasonable answer: “The Holy Spirit will come upon you.”

Yet Mary accepted the answer and later exalted God with one of the greatest praise songs ever written. Composers from Johann Sebastian Bach to Keith and Kristyn Getty (and dozens between) have set it to music. Like Zechariah, Mary was filled with the Holy Spirit and found her voice.

Let her words minister to you:

*For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed;  
for he who is mighty has done great things for me,  
and holy is his name.  
And his mercy is for those who fear him  
from generation to generation.  
He has shown strength with his arm;  
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts;  
he has brought down the mighty from their thrones  
and exalted those of humble estate;  
he has filled the hungry with good things,  
and the rich he has sent away empty. (Luke 1:48-53)*

The humble faith of Mary resonates today, from the teeming streets of Nairobi to the desert lands of Mali to the coffee plantations of Burundi. May they know and embrace the Son of the Most High.

## Listener Story

“Used to be quick to say God does not exist since I could not see any demonstration of his presence. [Thru the Bible] has shown me his existence through the creation and all the things God has made. Now I fully believe that God exists, and it has created in me the desire to seek for God day and night.” – Listener in Burundi

## Scripture

And Mary said, “My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior. For he has looked on the humble estate of his servant. For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed.”

– LUKE 1:46-48

## Prayer

Lord God, thank you for revealing yourself through radio. May the eyes of many across Africa be enlightened so they may know what is the hope of your calling, what are the riches of your glorious inheritance in the saints and what is the immeasurable greatness of your power toward all who believe. **AMEN**



# Dec. 5 Swahili

## Language

### Swahili

With more than 200 million speakers, Swahili, which originated in East Africa, is among the world's most widely spoken languages. The Swahili language, also called Kiswahili, is a Bantu language spoken either as a first language or as a fluent second language on the east coast of Africa in an area extending from the northern border of Kenya to the southern border of Tanzania. People who speak Swahili as their only language are usually referred to as Waswahili, but this name refers to their language only and does not denote any particular ethnic or tribal unit. Africa's Swahili-speaking zone now extends across a full third of the continent from south to north and touches on the opposite coast, encompassing the heart of Africa. The global presence of Swahili in radio broadcasting and on the internet has no equal among sub-Saharan African languages. On the international scene, no other African language can be heard from world news stations as often or as extensively.

## People

By immersing themselves in the affairs of a maritime culture at a key commercial gateway, the people who were eventually designated Waswahili created a niche for themselves. They were important enough in the trade that newcomers had little choice but to speak Swahili as the language of trade and diplomacy. And the Swahili population became more entrenched as successive generations of second-language speakers of Swahili lost their ancestral languages and became bona fide Swahili.

The key to understanding this story is to look deeply at the Swahili people's response to challenges. At the ways in which they made their fortunes and dealt with misfortunes. And, most important, at how they honed their skills in balancing confrontation and resistance with adaptation and innovation as they interacted with arrivals from other language backgrounds.

## Prayer Focus

- God provided for TWR Kenya to be able to broadcast *Thru the Bible* in Swahili to the Kakuma Refugee Camp – one of the seven largest in the world – through FM on its Atoo Sifa FM station. Pray that these broadcasts will bring encouragement and bear fruit in a difficult place.
- The *Every Man A Warrior* discipleship study was translated into Swahili this year, and the men's ministry was invited to bring its studies into 38 Kenyan prisons. Rejoice!



# Dec. 6 Zulu

## Language

### Zulu

Zulu people are an Nguni ethnic group in southern Africa. The Zulu people are the largest ethnic group and nation in South Africa, with an estimated 10 to 12 million people, living mainly in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. For many, the Zulu are the best-known African people. Their military exploits led to the rise of a great kingdom that was feared for a long time over much of the African continent. Their written history can be traced back to the 14th century. The Zulu language is characterized by *hlonipha* (respect) terms. Addressing elderly or senior people by their first names is viewed as lack of respect. Therefore, terms like *baba* (father) and *mama* (mother) are used not only to address one's parents but also other senior males and females of the community. Zulu is one of the 11 official languages in South Africa and is the native language spoken in two more countries by a part of the population. The Zulu language (*isiZulu* is the native form) has its roots in the

Niger–Congo language family. With a population share of about 23%, it is the most widely spoken first language in South Africa. It is the first language of an estimated 14 million people worldwide.

## People

Traditional Zulu religion includes belief in a creator god (*uNkulunkulu*) who is above interacting in day-to-day human life, although this belief appears to have originated from efforts by early Christian missionaries to frame the idea of the Christian God in Zulu terms. Nowadays, a mixture of traditional and Western ways of life is clearly evident in the lives of almost all Zulu people. Many Zulu converted to Christianity under colonialism. Although there are many Christian converts, ancestral beliefs have far from disappeared. Instead, there has been a mixture of traditional beliefs and Christianity. This kind of religion is particularly common among urbanites. There are also fervent Christians who view ancestral belief as outdated and sinful.

## Prayer Focus

- Pray that Zulu messages in the programs *Thru the Bible* and *Family Life* will strengthen believers who are struggling with dependence on ancestral beliefs, enabling them to find complete, lasting peace and hope in Jesus.
- Pray that *Sakha Ikhaya*, a TWR Zulu program aimed at restoring broken families in southern Africa, will bring hope and healing. And ask God to use TWR Women of Hope's radio program and prayer-group outreach to strengthen Zulu home life.



# Dec. 7 Portuguese

## Language

### Portuguese

Portuguese is spoken by about 14 million people as their mother tongue across Africa. Six African countries where Portuguese is the official language, known as the Lusophone Africa countries, are Mozambique, Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, São Tomé and Príncipe and Equatorial Guinea. In countries such as Angola and Mozambique, where Portuguese is an official language, it became a second language for many native Africans whose first languages are indigenous Bantu languages. It is also widely spoken in South Africa, where it's not one of the official languages.

## People

In Mozambique, only 30% of the population is Christian. Most of those are Catholic. The majority of the population practice traditional African religions or no religion at all. In the past, one had to be culturally Portuguese and religiously Catholic to be considered civilized in Portuguese Africa.

## Prayer Focus

- Praise God for the practical, foundational programs TWR broadcasts to Portuguese speakers across the African continent, including *Hope in Hard Times*, *Dr. Luke*, *Women of Hope* and *Foundations for Farming*. As Africans listen and learn practical tips, pray they develop spiritual focus, put aside traditional beliefs and discover the God of creation.
- Pray for TWR's African national team leaders to be strengthened as they build the kingdom of God through media in places that may be impossible to reach otherwise. Praise God for windup radios that have been distributed to listeners in remote places without electricity.



# Dec. 8 Turkana

## Language

### Turkana

Turkana is the language of the Turkana people of Kenya. It is spoken in northwestern Kenya, primarily in Turkana County, which lies west of Lake Turkana. It is one of the Eastern Nilotic languages and is closely related to Karamojong, Jie and Teso of Uganda, to Toposa spoken in the extreme southeast of South Sudan, and to Nyangatom in the South Sudan/Ethiopia Omo valley borderland. These languages together form the cluster of Ateker languages.

## People

Turkana are a Nilotic people native to the Turkana County in northwest Kenya, a semi-arid region bordering Lake Turkana in the east, Pokot, Rendille and Samburu people to the south, Uganda to the west, and South Sudan and Ethiopia to the north. They refer to their land as Turkan. According to the 2019 Kenyan census, Turkana numbers 1.02 million, or 2.14% of the Kenyan population, making the Turkana the third-largest Nilotic ethnic group in Kenya. The majority of the Turkana still follow their traditional religion. The Turkana believe in a god whose name is Kuj or Akuj; he is associated with the sky and is the creator of all things. The Turkana are receptive to change if they feel it is to their advantage. Religion is not seen as a vital part of their lives, so many are indifferent to Christianity. It is estimated that about 15% of the Turkana are Christian. PeopleGroups.org reports that less than 2% are evangelical Christians (2003).

## Prayer Focus

- Pray for the Turkana-speaking people, pastoral nomads of Kenya. As they travel to find pasture for their animals, may they discover the Good Shepherd through programs such as *The Word Today* and *Dorothy's Daily Devotional*, each speaking in their Turkana language.
- Pray that the nomadic and religious culture of the Turkana will not interfere with the stabilizing message of peace and hope in Jesus.



# Dec. 9 Hausa

## Language

### Hausa

The Hausa language is primarily found in the northern half of Nigeria and the southern half of Niger, although it can be heard throughout West Africa as a lingua franca, a common language used among people of various mother tongues.

The Hausa language originates from the Hausa people, although little is known about its origins. The Hausa people are one of the largest, if not the largest, ethnic groups in Africa. The Hausa language has, over time, spread beyond the Sahel region due to long-distance trading as well as pilgrimages to the holy cities of Islam. This spread has solidified it as a language to be used in commerce.

## People

Islam is by far the predominant religion among the Hausa people. About 98.4% of the 53 million ethnic Hausa people are Muslim, according to Joshua Project. This makes them one of the most prominent unreached people groups. Niger is mostly composed of Muslims. Nigeria is split, with the southern half being dominated by Christianity and the northern half by Islam.

## Prayer Focus

- Pray for the Hausa-speaking believers living among Islamic majorities of Africa to find strength and courage from God's Word through TWR programs: *Hope for the Hopeless*, *Hope for Today*, *The Word Today* and *Thru the Bible*.
- Pray that the messages within the programs *The Prophets* and *The Way of Righteousness* would speak clearly into the heart of Hausa who belong to a different faith. May the good news of Jesus, shared by people of their own culture, shine brightly and clearly in their understanding.



# Dec. 10 Yao

## Language

### Yao

The Yao language originates from the Yao people, an African ethnic group that started in the northwest of today's Mozambique but is now based around the southern end of Lake Malawi. When Arabs arrived at the southeastern coast of Africa, trading between the Yao and the Arabs became common. This made the Yao tribe one of the most powerful and influential tribes in Africa at the time, allowing them to expand into current-day Malawi and Tanzania. They moved into their current home of western Malawi around the 1830s due to their role in the Swahili-Arab slave trade.

## People

Due to their history with Arabs, the Yao people in Malawi, Tanzania, Mozambique and Zambia belonging to Islam, according to the I Am Yawo Project. Attempts at conversion to Christianity during the Portuguese colonization were ineffective, as the Yao people appreciated the ability to convert to Islam while still maintaining traditional animistic beliefs, which Christianity did not allow. This holds true today even though there are Christian majorities in these four countries where the Yao live.

## Prayer Focus

- Pray for the Yao speakers of East and southern Africa to find a passion to walk in Jesus' footsteps through the message of *The Way of Righteousness* program.
- Pray for Yao-speaking believers to find strength to stand strong in the name of Jesus in difficult places. Ask the Lord to use *The Word Today* to help Yao believers know how to share the gospel with friends who are followers of animism.





# Americas

## Reflection

When we revel in the wonderful songs from Zechariah and Mary, there is no song from Joseph. If he was a man of poetry, he must have been quiet about it.

Among the gospel writers, only Matthew pays attention to Joseph. But he isn't quoted directly. Not a single word. He was a man of action, not of words. One can almost hear young Jesus telling his buddies: "Yeah, Papa doesn't talk much. But you oughta see the way he works with his hands."

Joseph's character speaks for him. He knew that his intended, Mary, was pregnant. He knew he was not the father. Being a just man, he knew he must divorce her, the law requiring divorce even in the case of an engaged couple who are not yet married. Being a good man, he would do so quietly. He had the right to humiliate her publicly. It may have been what society expected. But Joseph wouldn't do it. Joseph wasn't a man of words, but he gives us a wonderful picture of obedience. As soon as the angel clarified matters in a dream, Joseph changed course. "He did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took his wife," Matthew tells us. No questions asked.

As soon as the angel told Joseph to take Mary and Jesus and flee to Egypt, they were off. Joseph might have wondered if a Jewish carpenter could find a job in Egypt. But again, no questions asked, just immediate obedience. If he had delayed, if he had considered his options, it would have been too late. God picked the right surrogate father for Jesus.

When he was told to return to Israel, that's what they did. There was no hesitation. Radical obedience was Joseph's hallmark, and thank God that it was.

Likewise, when an individual in Peru just "happened" to tune his clock radio one morning to the opening moments of the first installment of the *Thru the Bible* program, he knew what to do. He kept listening, day after day. It became a fundamental part of his life. Read his words at top right.

May more and more people across the Americas – Spanish speakers and French speakers and Portuguese speakers and Quechua speakers among others – hear the Word and walk the straight paths of obedience.

## Listener Story

"I learned about *Thru the Bible* one morning in 1987 when my clock radio miraculously turned on just as the five-year Bible program began. I was impressed because I understood that God was speaking to me to put me in his ways. ... I pray that your ministry will continue to ... straighten the paths of those who, like me, have wandered from time to time."

– Listener in Peru

## Scripture

"And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly."

– MATTHEW 1:19

## Prayer

Lord God, thank you for Joseph's example of radical obedience. Help us to be doers of the Word, and not hearers only. **AMEN**



# Dec. 12 Spanish

## Language

### Spanish

Around the world, 580 million people speak Spanish. That's 7.6% of the global population. Of these, 483 million are native Spanish speakers, which makes Spanish the second mother tongue in the world by number.

## People

The Spanish language made its way to the Americas in the 16th and 17th centuries. Since then, it has become an official language in about 20 countries in the region. Today, most of the world's Spanish speakers reside in the Americas. About 69% of Latin American adults identify as Roman Catholic.

Within the U.S., Spanish is the most widely used non-English language across all homes. The nation has over 45 million native and second-language Spanish speakers — up from just 11 million speakers in 1980.

## Prayer Focus

As we celebrate the newborn Christ child, let's ask for spiritual rebirth among the 350 million Spanish speakers in Latin America. Specifically:

- Pray in support of Lemuel Larrosa, who is the Spanish voice of the *Dr. Luke* program in Latin America. This popular radio program ministers to listeners' health, both physically and spiritually.
- TWR Uruguay's facility is a hub of training and Spanish-language production, serving the Southern Cone of South American countries. Please pray for the TWR Uruguay team.



# Dec. 13 Papiamentu

## Language

### Papiamentu

It is not the official language in any country, but in four countries it is spoken by at least part of the population as their mother tongue. Britannica.com categorizes it as a creole language based on Portuguese but heavily influenced by Spanish.

## People

Papiamentu is primarily spoken by the inhabitants of the ABC (Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao) islands of the Leeward Antilles.

In Aruba, religious traditions permeate various aspects of life. While some rituals are rooted in occult beliefs, others are not clearly linked to a religion.

Along with Christianity, other faiths practiced locally include Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism and traditional religions.

## Prayer Focus

As the light of the star guided the wise men to Jesus, may Papiamentu speakers be bathed in the true light which came into the world. (John 1:9)

- Although Christianity is widely practiced on these islands, it is diluted by superstition, occult practices and rituals. Pray that God will use Bible-centered RTM (the Spanish version of TWR) teachings to help people on these islands separate truth from error.
- Fortune telling and gambling are extremely popular. Pray against practices that distract Papiamentu speakers from the grace and truth that come only from Jesus. (John 1:17)



# Dec. 14 Quechua

## Language

### Quechua

With more than 10 million speakers, Quechua is a living language in seven countries of Latin America: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador and Peru. Quechua was the language of the Inca empire and remains the most spoken indigenous language in the Americas, according to the Penn Language Center.

## People

Quechua is a linguistic family with about 45 variations, spoken by different Quechua tribes living across large areas of South America.

The Quechua people are known for their colorful textiles, typically made of llama and sheep wool. Their crafts are extremely popular and receive high export demand.

Traditional Quechua belief is a blend of Roman Catholicism and folk religion. The Quechua people believe that supernatural forces dictate everyday events like weather and illness, so they would regularly make offerings in an attempt to influence such events.

## Prayer Focus

Pray that many Quechua speakers will truly embrace Jesus Christ this Christmas season as opposed to traditions that mix the Bible with folk religion.

- Lift up the Quechua-language program *History From the Inside*, which is distributed to 65 stations throughout Bolivia.
- Pray also for the producers of *Wawasman Yachachin*, an RTM program for children that's broadcast in Quechua in Bolivia.



# Dec. 15 Guaraní

## Language

### Guaraní

Guaraní, the indigenous language of Paraguay, was named an official language (along with Spanish) in 1992, according to Britannica.com. In other Latin American countries, indigenous languages are spoken only in indigenous communities, but 90% of the population of Paraguay speaks Guaraní.

## People

Originating in South America, the Guaraní are an indigenous group found mostly in Paraguay, as well as parts of Argentina, Brazil and Bolivia.

According to traditional Guaraní religion, each person has two souls: an earthly soul and a divine one. The divine soul gives rise to the dreams a person has. These dreams serve an important role to the shamans, who are religious leaders responsible for identifying evil, protecting people and curing diseases.

Guaraní who have experience more Christian influence believe that upon death, a person either goes to a land of darkness or a “land without evil.”

## Prayer Focus

As we meditate on how Jesus came to bring us the way, the truth and the life, may we pray for the Guaraní people to fully know Jesus.

- RTM Paraguay has been providing programs in the Guaraní language for 28 years. Pray for the team as they prepare programs such as *Thru the Bible*, *Safe Hope*, *Women of Hope* and *The Story From the Inside* in this language.
- Guaraní dairy farmers report listening to *Thru the Bible* while drinking maté, a traditional South American, caffeine-rich drink very early in the morning before milking their cows. Pray for spiritual fruit in the lives of these farmers.



# Dec. 16 Creole

## Language

### Creole

Creole is a category of languages that develop from the merging of an indigenous language with the language for a colonial power. Variations of Creole are spoken in Colombia, Belize, Panama, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Jamaica, among other places in the Americas.

## People

There is no such thing as a Creole people group. “Creole” originally referred to anyone of European or African descent who was born in the West Indies or parts of French or Spanish America, according to Britannica.com.

Widespread discontentment among Creole peoples of Latin America led to the wars for independence from Spain in the first part of the 19th century, Britannica says.

In the southern Caribbean, a common culture based on living in the same places has meant more than racial ancestry, according to the African American Registry. It says a Creole person could have French, Spanish, British and or Dutch ancestry mixed with sub-Saharan African and sometimes with indigenous people groups of the Americas. As time went on, nonwhite Creole people also intermarried with Arabs, Chinese, Japanese, Indians and Hmong.

## Prayer Focus

In the early 1800s, Creole people of Latin America fought for freedom from foreign rulers. But only Jesus can set us free from the oppression of sin. Pray for Creole people and others in their countries, many of whom need to experience freedom in Christ.

- In Colombia, the devotional *Alimento Para el Alma* has been delivered to 1,500 inmates in eight prisons. Pray for fruit.
- TWR ministers in Creole across the Caribbean both on radio and via TWR360. Pray that people will discover these life-transforming truths on their radios and on their cellphones and other devices.

# Dec. 17 French

## Language

### French

French is the official language of French Guiana, which is one of the nine “outermost regions” of the European Union. French is also spoken in Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Trinidad and Tobago, and in parts of Saint Lucia and Dominica.

## People

In Haiti, about 95% of the population is of African descent. Although Roman Catholicism is the official and majority religion, most Haitians – regardless of religion – practice some aspects of Vodou in their lives.

Vodou is a syncretic religion that integrates elements of Catholicism with Western and Central African spirituality. Its belief system revolves around family spirits inherited through maternal and paternal lines.

## Prayer Focus

The shepherds who greeted the newborn King Jesus were not from a group that was looked on with favor in their day. The people of Haiti, who speak a French-based form of Creole, know what it's like to be downtrodden. May they also know how much Jesus loves them.

- Ask God to intercede for the Haitian people, who have been besieged by gang warfare over the past couple of years.
- Pray for Radio-TV 4VEH, TWR's partner in Haiti, which broadcasts programs in Creole.



# Europe & CAMENA\*

## Reflection

Caesar Augustus is one of several Roman officials who play roles in the New Testament story.

The name of Pontius Pilate, who reluctantly sentenced Jesus to be crucified, is spoken in many churches every Sunday when the Apostles' Creed is recited. The Apostle Paul, during his lengthy imprisonment, appeared before Gov. Felix, before Porcius Festus and before Agrippa and Bernice. He appealed his case to Nero, the Caesar of his day.

Also known as Octavian, Gaius Octavius and Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus, Augustus was the great-nephew and adoptive son of Julius Caesar, according to Britannica, which is the source for all of the historical details in this section. After Julius Caesar's infamous murder, Augustus gradually came to power, outlasting rivals that included Mark Antony.

Consolidating and holding onto power required military action, which required money, which required taxes. Taxing the people required an accurate headcount. Three times during his 41-year reign, Augustus ordered a census of the civilian population. Luke tells us that everyone had to be registered in their hometown. Thus, Joseph made the 90-mile journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem with the very pregnant Mary.

Years later, scoffers would dismiss the possibility that Jesus was the Messiah, saying, "Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the offspring of David, and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David was?" (John 7:42). They didn't realize that although Jesus' hometown was Nazareth, he was born in Bethlehem, fulfilling the prophecy of Micah 5:2.

Britannica calls Augustus "one of the great administrative geniuses of history." But his memoir, *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* (Achievements of the Divine Augustus), is known only to scholars today.

Augustus also has a place in the best-selling book of all time, the Bible. In it, we see how Augustus' vanity and lust for power were used as one of the elements in accomplishing God's perfect plan.

Caesar Augustus versus King Jesus. Only one of them still changes lives today. Just as the listener in Serbia discovered (at right), God's Word alone sets people free.

## Listener Story

"Before I began studying the Bible, I thought it contained some legends and untrue stories. I thought it was an outdated book that can't have an impact on me today. When I set out to listen to the programs and study the Bible in detail, I felt how trapped I was in the darkness. God's Word set me free." — *Listener in Serbia*

## Scripture

"In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered."

— LUKE 2:1

## Prayer

Life-transforming Lord Jesus, people all around us are trapped in the darkness. Would you use us, Lord, to point them to you, that they might be set free.  
**AMEN**

\* CAMENA = CENTRAL ASIA,  
MIDDLE EAST, NORTH AFRICA





# Dec. 19 Kabyle

## Language

### Kabyle

Kabyle is an Amazigh language (also known by some as Berber) spoken by the Kabyle people in the northern and northeastern regions of Algeria. In addition, Kabyle is spoken in diaspora communities within Europe, mostly in France. It is estimated that a total of 5.6 million people globally speak the Kabyle language.

## People

Most of the Kabyle are Muslims but still retain many of their traditional beliefs, such as saint worship. Family is of great importance to them, which is why they usually celebrate Muslim holidays.

Many Kabyle are searching for answers beyond religious fundamentalism of the majority religion. Those who are living in North Africa face many restrictions if they wish to follow Christianity. Over the past years, there have been increasing forms of persecution toward the Kabyle Christians, such as churches being closed by local authorities.

## Prayer Focus

*Women of Hope* in Kabyle is a 30-minute program that airs weekly on Saturday in a region that is mostly closed to Christianity.

- Pray for God to protect the women who produce these programs as they face much opposition and even persecution on a personal level.
- During this season of Advent, ask the Father to bring many women to himself as they come across these programs.



# Dec. 20 Romani Balkan

## Language

### Romani Balkan

Romani Balkan is spoken by Romani groups within the Balkan region of Europe. These groups are spread out across the countries of Albania, Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia and other neighboring countries. Romani Balkan is the heart language of 1.2 million people.

## People

The Roma people usually adopt the religious faith of the countries where they live. Some Roma are Roman Catholic, while others embrace the Eastern Orthodox, Protestant or Islamic faiths. Generally, the Roma prefer to carry out religious rituals in their own homes or as part of folk observances.

## Prayer Focus

A new project for TWR's ministry to the Roma is in the planning stages. It's called Roma Discipleship Tool for Central and Eastern Europe.

- Please pray for the development of this tool and that it might be used to equip Roma pastors to bless and encourage Roma Christians in their walk with the Lord.
- Outside of Jewish people, the Roma are said to be the most persecuted group in Europe today. As you meditate on Joseph, Mary and Jesus fleeing to Egypt to escape persecution, remember the long-suffering Roma people in your prayers.



# Dec. 21 Farsi

## Language

### Farsi

Farsi is also known as Persian, a western Iranian language. It is the official language of Iran and the heart language of about 75 million people. Written in Arabic characters, modern Persian is also influenced by Arabic vocabulary and literature. Throughout the centuries, the language evolved, and modern grammar is in many ways much simpler than its ancestral forms.

## People

For the majority of the people, being “Persian” is synonymous with being “Muslim.” Reaching individuals with the message of the gospel is extremely difficult. For those who do hear and commit their lives to Christ, the questions are: “How can I grow spiritually without adequate discipleship resources in my own language?” and “How would a local body of believers obtain such materials when they are prohibited here?” It is of utmost importance that the Bible and message of salvation be presented to Persian people in a culturally appropriate manner.

## Prayer Focus

May a multitude of Farsi speakers come to faith in Christ this Advent season!

- Ask God to give visions and dreams to Farsi speakers so that when they hear the gospel broadcast in their own language their hearts might be prepared.
- Ask that the Father would supernaturally equip those who already have put their trust in Jesus to be able to live and explain the truth to inquiring people in their lives.



# Dec. 22 Kyrgyz

## Language

### Kyrgyz

Kyrgyz is the official language of Kyrgyzstan and is also spoken by many ethnic Kyrgyz people in Afghanistan, Turkey and parts of Pakistan and Russia. An estimated 2.9 million people speak Kyrgyz around the world.

Although originally Kyrgyz was written in a version of Perso-Arabic script, the Cyrillic alphabet has been used since 1940.

## People

Religion in Kyrgyzstan is influenced by shamanism and ancestor worship. Shamans hold great power as the evil eye, amulets, the occult and demonization are all widespread and prominent. The majority of the Kyrgyz consider themselves to be Muslim. When a Kyrgyz person becomes a Christian, he is seen as betraying his identity and family unity.

## Prayer Focus

Our partners in Kyrgyzstan are asking for prayer this Advent season, particularly in these areas:

- Ask God that their country might experience economic stability and peace.
- Pray for unity, farsightedness and new ideas among team members, as well as for a positive spiritual life and good health for each of them.



# Dec. 23 Russian

## Language

### Russian

Russian is an Eastern Slavic language and the official language of Russia. It is the most spoken native language in Europe and the world's seventh-most widely spoken language by native speakers.

Russian is written using the Cyrillic alphabet.

## People

The most widespread religion in the country is Russian Orthodox Christianity. The orthodox faith plays a significant role in the fabric of Russian society, much more than was the case during the era of the Soviet Union.

## Prayer Focus

TWR ministers the gospel of Christ to Russian-speaking people from outlets throughout Europe.

- The war in Ukraine this year left many people desperate for hope, not only in Ukraine but also in Russia and Belarus. Pray that many Russian speakers in all three countries may experience the hope that Jesus brought when he came into the world.
- During a season of war, we've seen numerous reports of people coming to faith in Christ, particularly in Ukraine. Praise God that many have come to know the Prince of Peace.

# Dec. 24 Qashqai

## Language

### Qashqai

Qashqai is spoken by the Qashqai people, an ethnic Turkic people group living mainly in the southern region of Iran. It is the heart language of almost one million people.

Like other Turkic languages spoken in Iran, Qashqai uses a modified version of the Perso-Arabic script.

## People

Islam is the state religion of Iran, and virtually all Qashqai people profess to be Muslims. In reality, however, they have very little contact with Islamic institutions or devout Muslims; they simply use Islam for its political advantages.

The Qashqai, many of whom live a nomadic lifestyle, tend to situate their camps widely distanced from other people groups. This makes it a challenge to reach them with the gospel message as there are very few believers among them. Those believers long for a fellowship where they can be with other brothers and sisters in Christ.

## Prayer Focus

As you remember the good news of Christ's coming this season:

- Pray for the few believers among the Qashqai people, that there might be rich fellowship among them and that they might attract others among their people group to Christ.
- Pray for open hearts and open minds among those who have not yet embraced the truth.



# joyful

**all ye nations** rise,  
join the triumph of the skies

Like the wise men from the east, all languages and cultures are welcome at the celebration of Jesus' birth. And because of that Bethlehem babe, we will one day join a multitude from every nation, tribe and tongue standing before the heavenly throne and crying out:

**“Salvation belongs to our God  
who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!”**

– Revelation 7:10

God bless you and keep you this Christmas!



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