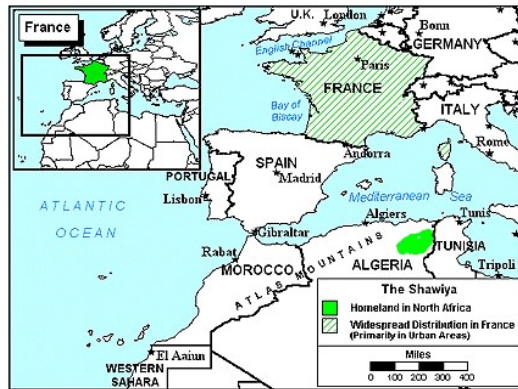


Shawiya in France



Photo: Alain Bachellier



Map: Bethany World Prayer Center

"Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest."

People Name	Shawiya
Country	France
Status	Unengaged Unreached
Population	114,000
Language	Tachawit
Religion	Islam
Written Scripture	Yes
Oral Scripture	No
Jesus Film	Yes
Gospel Recordings	Yes
Christ Followers	No
Churches	No
Workers Needed	2
Workers Reported	0

BACKGROUND

The Shawiya are Berber shepherds living mainly on the Aures Plateau of the Atlas Mountains in northern Algeria. The Africans call this region of North Africa Maghrib.

The Berber refer to themselves as Imazighen, or "free and noble men." This term has become an indicator of Berber identity and nationalism.

The inaccessible peaks of the Atlas Mountains have provided a base of resistance against the Romans, Vandals, Byzantine, and Arabs. However, the Muslims conquered the Maghrib between 670 and 700 A.D.

Emigration is becoming more common among the Berber, and it is estimated that several million now live in European cities. Many Shawiya have immigrated to France.

WHAT ARE THEIR LIVES LIKE?

The Shawiya are a part of various Berber groups that have risen in Algeria to defend their identity. In general, they are sturdy, thrifty, hospitable, and lovers of the soil. They are also said to be proud, shrewd, persistent, and loyal.

In North Africa, the Shawiya are semi-nomadic shepherds who primarily raise sheep and goats. During the winter, they

move their herds to the warm plains, then to higher pastures during the spring and summer months.

Decades of immigration have left a large community of Shawiya in France. For some, service in the army and in the factories of France during World War I were avenues of immigration. When the war ended, many remained in France. Others arrived after World War II when there was a labor shortage in France. Recently, others went as merchants, since France is one of the most important trading partners of North Africa.

WHAT ARE THEIR BELIEFS?

Although they embraced Islam as a new religion, the Shawiya also kept their pre-Islamic cultural and ritual traditions. The acceptance of Islam and the adoption of Arabic ways never completely erased their Berber culture. Although they are nominally Sunni Muslims, most Shawiya have little knowledge of the practices of the Koran and other dimensions of Middle Eastern Islam.

WHAT ARE THEIR NEEDS?

In the eighth century, invading Arabs forced the Shawiya to accept Islam. Prior to that time, many of them were Christians. Those still living in North Africa do not have the freedom to follow Christianity, but those in

France do. Although a number of them have responded and converted to the Christian faith, there are still many who have never heard the Gospel.

The number of North African immigrants living in France continues to be a serious social issue. The Berber, including the Shawiya, are at the bottom of the economic scale and subject to racial prejudice. Christian workers who can minister the love and acceptance of Jesus to the Shawiya are essential to win them to Christ.

PRAYER ITEMS

* Ask the Lord to burden the hearts of the French Christians for the Shawiya who live among them.

* Ask the Holy Spirit to give creative ideas for evangelism to missions agencies focusing on the Shawiya.

* Pray that strong local churches will be raised up among the Shawiya in France.