

Eritrea

Weigh In

1. Eritrea is governed by a totalitarian regime that seeks to control every aspect of life. For example, it is illegal to be an evangelical Christian in Eritrea.
2. Some human rights advocates have referred to Eritrea as “the North Korea of Africa,” pointing to the iron-fisted brutality that’s used to control its people. The nation has one of the worst religious freedom records in Africa. There are thought to be between 400 and 500 Christians indefinitely detained in Eritrean prisons who have not been officially charged with anything.
3. Military service in Eritrea is mandatory, even for women. Men aged 18 to 40 and women aged 18 to 27 are conscripted. Women represent around 30 percent of the country’s military.
4. The Arabian camel, also known as a “dromedary,” is Eritrea’s national animal.

Way Out

- It is very challenging to be a Christian in Eritrea. One way we can support Eritrean believers is to share what we know about them and their difficulties with others.
- You can help support the persecuted church this summer by hosting a BBQ and inviting guests to learn about Eritrea while enjoying a meal. Invite your friends, church, family or neighbourhood to join the event. You could sell hotdogs, hamburgers, salads, freezies and drinks to raise money, or provide an option for guests to donate directly.
- Advertising on social media in advance would be a great way to promote your fundraiser! Consider setting up various information stations for visitors to learn more about the country and its citizens. Encourage those who attend to pray. Remember, prayer changes everything!

1

Research the concept of totalitarianism. Is it paradoxical for Christians to consciously break the law? Consider St. Augustine’s words: “An unjust law is no law at all.” What is the difference between a just law and an unjust law?

2

Many Eritrean prisons are nothing more than metal shipping containers. With potential daytime highs in the 30s and nighttime lows near freezing, what effect would these extreme temperatures have on prisoners who are being held in such a structure? How does the human body maintain its optimal temperature?

3

Required military service, along with years of communism and economic depression, have caused many Eritreans to flee the country. Research how Canada’s military system works. How would your family be affected if Canada had a conscription program similar to that of Eritrea?

4

Dromedary camels have one hump, while Bactrian camels have two humps. You can easily remember the difference by thinking of a one-humped sideways D for Dromedary and a two-humped sideways B for Bactrian. Camels can go seven days without water in hot weather and six months in cool weather. How long can a person go without water?

One Way

The declared goal of Marxism is utopia. Through reforms in society, Marxists believe that humans will be able to reach this paradise on earth, where everyone is equal and no one has an unmet need. Marxism rejects God as Creator and Saviour, and governments adhering to this ideology try to fix society’s problems by implementing strong controls to curb issues that arise out of humanity’s sinful nature – selfishness, greed, etc. Inconsistencies are apparent, however, since Marxism denies that people are inherently evil; except, ironically, those who are of the upper class or in power. These members of society are seen as the evil ones whom Marxist revolutionists seek to overthrow.

Biblically, the book of Genesis opens with a world that had originally been created as a perfect environment in every way for Adam’s headquarters. Essentially, it was a utopia. However, God’s nature is comprised of love, which cannot be automated. Humankind must be free to choose to love their Maker – or not. Although He ran the risk of having humans reject Him, God provided an opportunity for humankind to make the choice between good and evil...between a perfect life with God or the rejection of all He is, in exchange for all that He is not.

Recommended Read

Song of the Nightingale: One Woman’s True Story of Faith and Persecution in Eritrea by Helen Berhane (see VOMC’s Resources).

