

Weigh In

Weighing the facts about Burkina Faso

1.

Only 33.7 percent of all women, and less than 41 percent of the total population, can read and write in Burkina Faso.

2.

Burkina Faso is one of the poorest countries in the world. Only 19.5 percent of the population has access to electricity.

3.

In areas where militant groups are active, hundreds of churches have been forced to close due to the ongoing risk of violent attacks.

4.

Those who convert from Islam to Christianity often face intense pressure from family members to renounce their new Christian faith.

Sources:

<https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/burkina-faso/>

<https://www.opendoors.org/en-US/persecution/countries/burkina-faso/>

<https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/FESTIMA>

Corresponding Question Points:

1. Since many people in Burkina Faso cannot read or write, spreading the Gospel and distributing Bibles can be challenging. What are some ways God's Word can be shared without relying on the ability to read?
2. No access to electricity means a very different way of life compared to ours. What changes to your daily routine would you need to make? For example, how would you cook your food?
3. Worshipping with other believers is a precious gift not everyone is able to enjoy due to local dangers. What would you miss most if you couldn't go to church? What could believers do instead to worship together?
4. When experiencing ridicule, discouragement or even physical abuse from people because of our faith in Jesus, what should we practise in order to not give up? Look up Isaiah 40:3. Practically, is it always easy? Explain your answer.

One Way

Religious Comparison: Compare & Contrast What the Bible Says

God has instilled a desire in every heart to know Him, yet many people attempt to fulfill this longing in other ways. As a result, several religions are practised in Burkina Faso, including animism and Islam.

The animistic worldview believes that objects, places, animals and plants possess souls. During rituals, followers of this religion use masks to express their beliefs. However, most people living in Burkina Faso practise the religion of Islam. They identify as being Muslim and believe that Allah is the one and only true God. The Quran (the Islamic holy book) teaches that anyone who does not honour Allah by following the teaching of the Quran dishonours God. This is the unforgivable sin in Islam. Those who do not honour Allah are believed to be practising idolatry.

The Bible says there is only one God (Yahweh) who exists in three persons – Father, Son (Jesus Christ) and Holy Spirit. The first of the Ten

Commandments that God gave to Moses is this: *“I am the Lord your God...you shall have no other gods before Me”* (Exodus 20:2-3 ESV).

Both Islam and Christianity require absolute dedication to one God. Some people mistakenly believe that both religions refer to the same God, just with different names. However, Yahweh and Allah are not the same God. Yahweh is a loving God and has a personal relationship with all who believe in Him: *“But to all who...believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God...”* (John 1:12 ESV). Islam teaches that Allah does not consider his followers as sons and daughters, but as his creations and servants.

The Bible teaches that God calls His children to treat everyone with love and respect, no matter what they believe, because each person is made in His image (Genesis 1:27). Jesus’ last command to His followers while He was on earth was to go and share the message of the Gospel with love, gentleness and humility to everyone (Mark 16:15).

Like Marcel and his family, Christians are called to sow seeds of faith, then allow people the freedom to choose Jesus on their own. It’s a personal decision that must take place in one’s own heart. The Bible instructs believers to show love to their enemies and those who have not yet accepted Christ, sharing the Gospel with compassion, while allowing individuals the freedom to choose. This approach reflects what it means to walk in the Christian way – living out faith with grace, truth and love.

