

# 2008 Global Prayer for Somalia

producer of child soldiers, endless refugees,  
broken lives... and Christian martyrs

Open Doors



## Marginalized People

### Widows

Khadra's husband died after her sixth child was born. In order to provide for her family, she began selling *khat* on the market. *Khat* is an evergreen shrub that, when its leaves are chewed, gives a stimulating, narcotic effect. "I have to leave my children at home, unattended," she said. "But I don't have a choice. Who would feed my children otherwise?"

Many Somali women have lost their husbands in the war, in accidents, or through sickness. Traditionally, the brother of the deceased husband would take the widow as his wife. Nowadays this custom has become rare, forcing the widows to become the providers for their families. Some widows have fled with their children into neighboring Kenya and Ethiopia to find work in order to provide for their children.

### Children/ Orphans

A Somali proverb says, "Every camel was once two years old." This proverb does not apply to Somali children where a high percentage of the Somali children never reach the age of two.

According to humanitarian statistics, the condition of Somali children ranks among the worst in the world. They have lived through droughts, floods and famine. They have lost family members to war and disease. They all know what it means to grow up in a violent environment; almost an entire generation has grown up knowing only war.

In spite of humanitarian efforts, Somali children continue to suffer from dysfunctional families, a high divorce rate, lack of medical supplies, malnutrition and traumatic experiences.

### Disabled People

In the Horn of Africa, little is done for people with disabilities and the concept of "special education" is nonexistent. There are no services, no schools, and no help for families struggling to cope with a disabled family member.

In the Somali culture, a mentally disabled person is assumed to be a curse from God as a result of sin committed by one of the parents. Parents sometimes hide an intellectually challenged child to avoid discrimination or isolation from the rest of the community. In some cases, a husband will leave his wife because of a disabled child, leaving her to be solely responsible for caring for the needs of the entire family.

## Prayer Requests

- Pray that God, 'the Father of the fatherless and defender of widows' (Psalm 68: 5) may have mercy on all of the Somali widows.
- In Jeremiah 49: 11, God says, "Your widows can trust in me." Pray that the Somali widows may come to understand this truth.
- Pray for God to meet the daily needs of impoverished widows.
- Pray for comfort as they see the suffering of their children and pray that God will provide a hedge of protection around these children.
- Pray for love, peace, safety and protection for the Somali children in need.
- Pray that workers can provide physical and emotional healing for the sick and emotionally wounded children.
- Pray as Jesus did: "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." (Matthew 19:14)
- Pray that Christian workers will be resourceful in helping the disabled.
- Pray that families of the disabled can know the love that God has for their disabled family member and have their burdens lifted by their faith in Jesus.
- Pray that the government will provide resources and education.
- Pray against discrimination and ignorance expressed towards the disabled community and their families.