

Hausa in Nigeria

Prayer Card



Introduction / History

The Hausa are the largest ethnic group in all of West Africa. Thirty percent of all Hausa can be found in the north and northwest regions of Nigeria, an area known as "Hausaland."

The Hausa have been heavily involved in long distance trading for many centuries. Traders exchanged gold from the Middle East for leather, crafts, and food. Hausa communities can also be found in other West African nations such as Chad, Ghana, and the Ivory Coast.

Info



38,016,000 in Nigeria



Language - Hausa



Largest religion - Islam (99.85%)

What are their lives like?

In comparison to some other African tribes, the Hausa have reasonable standards of health care, diet, shelter, electricity, and education. However, life for the Hausa is still very difficult. For example, nearly one-third of the people are unemployed, and only about half of the population can read and write. The average life expectancy of a Nigerian is only 53 years.

In marriage relationships, close relatives, preferably cousins, are chosen as partners. Marriages are arranged, and ceremonies last for weeks. Everyone is to appear happy except the bride. In the village compounds, each wife has her own hut where she and her young children sleep. Often the husband has his own hut where the wives take turns spending the night. In Nigerian terms, a woman is almost always defined as someone's daughter, wife, mother, or widow and is given less educational opportunities than men. In fact, women are often confined to the home, except for visits to relatives and attending ceremonies. For the most part, women do not work in the fields, but are responsible for preparing all the daily meals. There is a large population of single women, especially in the cities, due to the high divorce rate.

What are their beliefs?

By 1500, Islam had been introduced to the Hausa by traders. Many of the urban Hausa embraced it right away, in hopes of enhancing their businesses. However, the villagers were not as receptive to this new religion.

Prayer Points

- Pray that Christian converts would be bold in the face of family pressure and persecution.
- Ask the Lord to raise up loving Christians who are willing to share Christ with the Hausa.
- Ask God to encourage and protect the small number of Hausa believers.
- Pray that a vigorous church will be raised up among the Hausa.

Turks in Türkiye

Prayer Card



Introduction / History

Turkey is considered to be a "link" between the Orient (Chinese and Mongols) and the Occidental (Anglo-Saxons, Slavs, Goths, and Latins). The Turk, therefore, have a knowledge and mixture of both Eastern and Western cultures.

Turkey is the only secular republic with a majority of the population being Muslim. Turkish law is not based on Islamic law, but is rather a republic modelled after the Swiss and French legal systems.

The Turks represent a great opportunity to create a "fulcrum" church movement that could reach many other Muslim people groups.

Info



61,482,000 in Türkiye



Language - Turkish



Largest religion - Islam (96.98%)

What are their lives like?

Though traditional ways continue to exist in some areas, the typical Turks lives a secularized, modern urban life, with all the materialistic advantages and temptations that go with it.

Some of the Turkish men and women in Turkey are doctors, lawyers, architects, or engineers. About 60% of Turks live in major cities such as Istanbul (with 15 million people), Ankara, Izmir and Adana. About 40% of Turks are employed in agricultural sector living in villages and using natural resources to earn a living. Some peasants live as nomads, moving their sheep from place to place in search of greener pastures and dwelling in tents or huts.

Relaxation is of the utmost importance to the Turk. Coffee houses are places where men meet to visit and talk politics or business. In general, the Turks are courteous, gentle people who readily show hospitality to strangers. They are also very patriotic and have a deep sense of nationalistic pride and love for their country.

What are their beliefs?

The Turks of Turkey are predominantly nominally Sunni Muslim, believing in one god (Allah), and an eternal heaven and hell. However, they also have many ethnic beliefs as well. For example, they believe that men have the power to curse others by giving them the "evil eye." They believe that one is protected against such a curse by wearing blue beads, which the evil eye cannot face. Another way to avoid this cursing glare is to spit in a fire and pray to Allah. They also believe that if a woman puts fish oil around a door and a man walks through it, he will love her for the rest of his life.

Prayer Points

- Ask God to give the Turkish believers boldness to share the Gospel with their own people.
- Pray that God will grant wisdom and favor to missions agencies focusing on the Turks.
- Ask the Lord to save key leaders among the Turks who will boldly declare the Gospel.
- Pray that many Turks living abroad will be reached with the Gospel and will take it back to Turkey.
- Pray that Turkey will avoid both ethnic strife (especially with the Kurds) and resurgent Muslim fundamentalism.

Koreans in North Korea

Prayer Card



Introduction / History

Officially, the North Korean Constitution gives political power to the people. However, real political power belongs to the Communist Party. The constitution guarantees such rights as freedom of the press, religion, and speech; however, the Koreans in North Korea have very little freedom in those areas. For instance, all radio and television broadcasts are strictly controlled by the Korean Central Broadcast Committee. All privately owned radios are preset to the government frequency. Current news is often withheld from the public, or even altered. The people often do not learn of news events until weeks, months, or even years after they occurred.

Info



25,582,000 in North Korea



Language - Korean



Largest religion -Non-Religious

What are their lives like?

Before the 1900s, Korea was an agricultural society with strong family ties. Almost all the people lived in small villages and worked on farms. However, since the late 1940s, the Communists have taken steps to industrialize the country. Today, most urban North Korean work in factories, while those in rural areas continue working on farms.

Education for the Korean is free and mandatory for the first 11 years. (This includes a year of preschool.) Students must have Communist Party approval to continue their education after the tenth grade. During their summer vacations, students must work for the state.

In North Korea, the government controls all aspects of Korean life. Most forms of entertainment are supported and controlled by the government. Even the work of artists is restricted. Anything that conflicts with Communist principles is forbidden.

What are their beliefs?

A mixture of Confucian thought, Buddhism, and shamanism (belief in an unseen world of gods, demons, and ancestral spirits) were previously dominant among the Koreans.

Koreans believe that deceased family members remain within the family circle, in spiritual form. For this reason, the most important concern of the family is to produce a male heir to carry on the family line. He is called on to perform ancestral rituals in the household and at the family grave site.

Prayer Points

- Pray that laws in North Korea that restrict the preaching of the Gospel will be changed.
- Ask God to create an openness to Christianity within the hearts of Koreans.
- Pray that the doors of North Korea will soon be open to Christian missionaries.
- Ask the Lord to protect, strengthen, and encourage the small number of Korean Christians.
- Pray that God will give these believers opportunities to share the love of Jesus with their own people.
- Ask God to raise up strong local churches among the Koreans of North Korea.

Sudanese Arab in Sudan

Prayer Card



Introduction / History

Sudanese Arabs originated in the Khartoum region of Sudan many centuries ago. Today, they live primarily in northern and central Sudan and in Egypt. A few groups are also scattered in Saudi Arabia, Ethiopia, Libya, Yemen, Since 1983, conflict between the predominately north Arab and southern animist and Christian regions of the Sudan has accounted for more than two million deaths. Killings, mass rapes, looting of livestock and burning of villages by the Arab militia, Janjaweed, have devastated the area. It is estimated that over 70,000 have lost their lives due to hunger and disease alone.

Info



14,705,000 in Sudan



Language - Dari



Largest religion - Islam (99.95%)

What are their lives like?

Most Sudanese Arabs live in small rural villages. They grow grains, vegetables, and cotton, and raise livestock, all of which are used for food or trade. Clusters of mud-brick homes with dirt floors make up the villages. The homes are built close together, which reflects the close ties between the family members within the communities. Although farming is the chief occupation of the villagers, some of them have jobs as skilled carpenters, tailors, religious leaders, or barbers.

Some Sudanese Arabs live in towns or cities. They have a greater variety of occupations, but weaker family ties than those who live in the villages. These Arabs have more concern for such things as economic prosperity and education. Today, many of them work in the oil fields of Saudi Arabia, attend universities in neighboring countries, or use trucks instead of camels.

What are their beliefs?

The Sudanese Arabs are Muslims, as are most Arabs. Identification with the Islamic religion is one of the primary cultural characteristics of most Arabs. They are devoted to their faith, and this is evident in their daily life.

While the men gather in the local mosque five times a day for prayer, women meet in homes and have their own religious services, conducted by female religious leaders. Only on certain occasions are the women permitted inside the mosques.

Prayer Points

- Ask God to strengthen, encourage, and protect church planters, especially the women workers.
- Pray for additional Bibles and Christian literature to be provided and placed.
- Ask God to bring natural and spiritual peace to this needy country.
- Ask the Lord to call out prayer teams to go and break up the soil through worship and intercession.
- Pray that God will raise up long term workers to join those who have already responded.
- Pray that the Holy Spirit will anoint Christian broadcasts as they are aired among the Sudanese Arabs.

Pushtun in Pakistan

Prayer Card



Introduction / History

The Pashtun of Afghanistan and Pakistan have been called the largest Muslim tribal society in the world. There are at least 30 major tribes, and countless sub-tribes and clans. Spread over a vast geographical area and riven by socio-economic, political, tribal and linguistic (dialectal) differences, Pashtuns nevertheless share a unique sense of common identity. Pashtun identity is based on four elements: Heritage (descent from a common ancestor); Islam (99.9% Muslim); the Pashtunwali Code of Honor ("The Way of the Pashtun"); and to some extent, Language (Pakhtu or Pashto).

Info



32,097,000 in Pakistan



Language - Pushto



Largest religion -Islam (100%)

What are their lives like?

The Pashtun were the traditional rulers of Afghanistan for over 250 years. Since the overthrow of the Afghan king, communist coup and Soviet invasion in the 1970s, Afghanistan has been in a state of constant conflict. In the 1970's and 1980 's, the Pakistan-Afghanistan borderlands were the launchpad for mujahideen ("freedom fighters") who, with Western, Saudi, and global support, resisted and overthrew the communist regime. The cost was high: Over 3.5 million refugees settled into hundreds of refugee camps in border provinces of Iran and Pakistan; one-third of the population was displaced. During the 1990s, Pashtun tribal areas and thousands of Arab-funded madrassas (religious schools) throughout Pakistan, became the seedbed for the rise of the Taliban movement. Driven by a combination of religious zeal and Pashtun nationalism, and fueled by Arab money, the "Taliban" (a term for "religious students") imposed a harsh, hyper-conservative (Wahabi) version of Islam on the country.

What are their beliefs?

Although most Pakistani Christians are from a former low-caste background and speak Punjabi, some have overcome social, language and prejudice barriers to reach out in love to their Muslim neighbors. Despite growing anti-Western and anti-American sentiment over the last 20 years, Pakistan still offers opportunities for investment, learning, business and service. Many expatriates have enjoyed the renowned hospitality and friendship of Pashtuns and other Pakistani peoples.

Prayer Points

- Pray for the production and distribution of all forms of media in the Pashto language. The demand and response have increased!
- Pray for Bible translations in progress!
- Pray for more workers to serve among the Pashtun people.
- No one knows how many Pashtuns are following Jesus. Seeds of the Gospel have been sown widely. The greatest barriers to faith are social and cultural.
- Pray for God's Spirit to strengthen and protect new believers and to empower their lives and witness!

Japanese in Japan

Prayer Card



Introduction / History

Japan is a large group of islands located between the North Pacific Ocean and the Sea of Japan. The five main islands are Honshu, Hokkaido, Kyushu, Shikoku, and Okinawa. Honshu contains the capital, Tokyo, as well as many major industrial areas.

Rugged mountain chains containing several active volcanoes account for more than 71% of Japan's total land area. Most of the countryside is covered by dense forests, leaving little land for farming. Japan is subject to numerous earthquakes, typhoons, and monsoons.

Info



117,840,000 in Japan



Language - Japanese



Religion - Buddhism (69.80%)

What are their lives like?

Japan's economy is based on a competitive market/private enterprise system. Many families farm as a secondary occupation. Typically, the wife tends to the farm while the husband works full-time in a business or industry. Rice remains the principal crop, though its production is strictly controlled. Other sources of income include livestock production, fishing, shipbuilding, foreign trade, scientific research and technology development.

Traditionally, Japanese buildings are made of wood with deep projecting roofs as protection against the monsoons. Rural Japanese homes are built with a joined skeleton frame of post and beam construction. The floor is raised above the ground with its posts resting on a foundation stone, which allows the structure to bounce during earthquakes. In cities, most people live in apartments or housing corporations.

What are their beliefs?

Shintoism is the native religion of Japan. It is rooted in animism (belief that non-living objects have spirits). Its many gods or spirits are known as kami. Buddhism was introduced to Japan in the sixth century. Today, most Japanese claim to be both Shintoist and Buddhist.

Traditions of Shintoism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism have all contributed to Japanese religious principles: ancestor worship; a belief in religious continuity of the family; a close tie between the nation and religion; a free exchange of ideas among religious systems; and religious practices centered on the use of prayer meditation, amulets, and purification.

Prayer Points

- Ask the Lord to call laborers to go to Japan and share Christ with the Japanese.
- Pray that Christian businessmen will have open doors to share the Gospel with the Japanese.
- Pray that Christian radio and television broadcasts will be effective in reaching the Japanese.
- Pray that God will raise up teams of intercessors to stand in the gap for these precious people.
- Ask the Lord to raise up strong local churches among the Japanese.

Xiang Chinese in China

Prayer Card



Introduction / History

The Xiang are traditionally acknowledged as the most stubborn and proud of all Chinese peoples. "The people themselves are the most clannish and conservative to be found in the whole empire and have succeeded in keeping their province practically free from invasion by foreigners and even foreign ideas."

Info



35,647,000 in China



Language - Chinese, Xiang



Largest religion - Ethnic Religions

What are their beliefs?

Recently there has been an upsurge in religious interest in Hunan, as people seek to fill the spiritual void in their hearts. "A monastery in Hunan has witnessed tens of thousands of pilgrims arriving to worship the three 'gods' of Communist China - Chairman Mao, Zhou Enlai and Zhu De. This pilgrimage has set alarm bells ringing in the local government over the revival of superstition."

In 1861 Welsh missionary Griffith John met a Hunan military mandarin, who "boasted of the glory and martial courage of the Hunan men and said there was no danger of their ever believing in Jesus or of His religion taking root there." The pride of the Xiang has made them the most unreached of all Han Chinese peoples. Today only 80,000 of the Xiang are Christians. The entire Christian population of Hunan is numbered at no more than 120,000. Because of internal strife, the Hunan church has been described as a "disaster area."

Without the guidance of Christ, these people will be lost in this life and the life to come. They need someone to go to them as Christ-bearers.

Prayer Points

- Pray for the spiritual blindness and bondage to the evil one to be removed so they can understand and respond to Christ.
- Pray for the Lord to provide for their physical and spiritual needs as a testimony of his power and love.
- Pray that the Xiang people will have a spiritual hunger that will open their hearts to the King of kings.
- Pray for an unstoppable movement to Christ among them.

Northern Uzbek in Uzbekistan

Prayer Card



Introduction / History

The Uzbeks are a Turkic people group located primarily in Central Asia. There are large Uzbek communities in Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan, as well as small communities in many other nations, including the United States.

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Info



28,516,000 in Uzbekistan



Language - Uzbek



Largest religion - Islam
(95.98%)

What are their lives like?

Traditionally, most Uzbeks were semi-nomadic shepherds; however, today, most of those living in Central Asia either farm or live and work in larger towns and cities. Among those who farm, the principal crop is cotton. Fruits, vegetables, and grains are also grown.

The traditional dress of the Uzbeks is very distinctive. But today, most wear Western style clothing, especially those who live in large, previously Soviet cities.

What are their beliefs?

Most Uzbeks are Sunni Muslims of the Hanafite branch. Like other Muslims, the Uzbeks believe that there is one God, Allah, whose will was revealed through the prophet Mohammed and then recorded in the Koran.

The Uzbeks are not generally Orthodox Muslims. Many traditional beliefs have been mingled with their Islamic practices. Many of the younger generation are either atheists or non-religious.

Prayer Points

- Pray that Christian Uzbek leaders would be unified in their evangelistic activities.
- Pray that new Uzbek Christians would understand God's Word quickly and commit themselves to a local fellowship where they will find strength.
- Pray that Christians in other countries to start reaching out to their Uzbek neighbours and they would be receptive for Christ's love.
- Pray for effectiveness of the Jesus film and Christian radio broadcasts that are being aired among the Uzbeks.
- Pray for God to raise up strong local churches in all these countries among the Uzbeks.

Burmese in Myanmar

Prayer Card



Introduction / History

The Burmese are the majority and dominant people of the Southeast Asian nation of Myanmar or Burma as it was formerly known. The Burmese or Burma people were originally from the hills of Tibet in western China. Today, they live in Myanmar, and they speak Burmese, a Tibeto-Burmese language.

In modern times, Myanmar has had a long history of coups, wars, and rebellions. Ethnic divisions and political unrest have been common since the first Burmese kingdom in the eleventh century. Myanmar gained its independence from Britain in 1948.

Info



31,273,000 in Myanmar



Language - Burmese



Largest religion - Buddhism
(94.95%)

What are their lives like?

Rice is the staple food of the Burmese people. Burmese farmers grow rice in irrigated fields called wet rice farming. They also cultivate tropical fruits, vegetables, palm tree, and coconuts. Most rural families also raise chickens, and a few goats and pigs to supplement their diets. Some Burmese farmers use the slash and burn method of agriculture.

Mothers work with their babies, while the older children accompany their grandparents. In rural areas, children frequently quit school after a few years to help their family make a living.

Urban Burmese live lives much like they do in Western nations. They work in education, retail, manufacturing, construction, and administration.

The Burmese do not recognize clans or lineages. Marriages are monogamous, and rarely arranged by the parents. Young couples generally live with the bride's parents for the first few years after they are married. Then they will set up their own homes after two or three years.

What are their beliefs?

The Burmese are predominantly Buddhists. The traditional goal in Buddhism is to seek the middle path to Nirvana, or ultimate peace. The Burmese have mixed these Buddhist beliefs with their own animistic beliefs (belief that non-living objects have spirits).

Prayer Points

- Pray that the few Burmese believers would live holy lives, being zealous to grow into the image of Christ.
- Ask the Lord to send Holy Spirit anointed workers to the Burmese.
- Pray for a spiritual hunger among the Burmese and a desire to read the Burmese Bible.
- Pray for just and lasting peace in Myanmar especially between the Burmese and the Rohingya peoples.
- Pray for a growing disciple making movement among the Burmese in this decade.

Arabs in Morocco

Prayer Card



Introduction / History

The ancestors of the Moroccan Arabs originated in the Arabian Desert. From there, they gradually migrated into northern Africa. Over the centuries, the Arabs have become somewhat intermingled with the Berbers, and this has influenced their way of life. Nevertheless, the two groups have remained distinct.

Socially, there are two contrasting groups of Moroccan Arabs: those living in the cities and those in the rural areas. Among the rural Arabs, several classes have formed, which include nobles (alleged descendants of Mohammed), large landowners, peasants, and tenant farmers. Moroccan Arabs live mainly in the north and west portions of Morocco. However, they prefer living in the more fertile regions near the Mediterranean Sea. Moroccan Arabs make up less than half of the country's population.

Info



25,000,000 in Morocco



Language - Arabic, Moroccan



Religion - Islam (99.91%)

What are their lives like?

Most Moroccan Arabs are rural peasants. Therefore, farming has become their way of life. Because the Arabs are fond of grains, they produce and consume large amounts of barley, wheat, and cereals. In areas where water is plentiful, they grow other staples such as tomatoes, potatoes, beans, and peas. They also grow grapes, olives, oranges, peaches, and pears.

Most of the rural Moroccans raise chickens, goats, and sheep. This supplemental food source provides milk, eggs, butter, and meat. Although they do very little hunting and fishing, trade with other tribes has flourished.

Whether in towns or villages, the women and men have distinct jobs. In the villages, men work the fields, herd the animals, and provide protection, while the women do housework and care for the children. Village women have a few agricultural tasks as well: milking the cows, goats, and sheep, and making butter. In the cities, women never work outside their homes. Traditional roles exist, but are being influenced by western culture.

What are their beliefs?

Virtually all Moroccan Arabs in this region are Muslim. They adhere to the Koran and observe the five basic "pillars" of Islam, which include affirming that there is no god but Allah, and Mohammed is his prophet; praying five times a day while facing Mecca; giving alms generously; fasting during Ramadan, the ninth month of the Muslim year; and trying to make at least one pilgrimage to Mecca.

Prayer Points

- Pray that the Lord will grant wisdom and favor to missions agencies currently focusing on Moroccan Arabs.
- Ask God to give Moroccan Arab believers boldness to share the love of Christ with their friends and families.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to soften the hearts of Moroccan Arabs toward Christians so that they will be receptive to the Gospel.
- Pray that God will call forth teams of intercessors who will faithfully stand in the gap for Moroccan Arabs.
- Ask the Lord to raise up strong local Christian fellowships among the Moroccan Arabs of Morocco.

Persians, in Iran

Prayer Card



Introduction / History

The Persians are a people rich in history and culture, love and laughter, respect and honor. They enjoy a rich history of many empires of kings and kingdoms, poetry, art and advances in math and science. They were typically ruled by a king until the late 1970s, when their last king or shah was overthrown by Islamic revolutionists. Now Iran is an Islamic nation under the ayatollah, or religious leader. The revolution is still fresh in many of their memories and the current government has a heavy hand on them in many aspects of their life.

Info



42,519,000 in Iran



Language - Persian, Iranian



Largest religion - Islam (97.5%)

What are their lives like?

There is a large middle class now in most of Iran. Appearance is very important, so even lower class citizens can sometimes be seen wearing designer clothes. They are fiercely devoted to family and family get-togethers happen almost everyday. Because of the Islamic government, women are expected to cover their heads and wear a special dress in public. However, most are secular and only abide by the rules in public, since penalties are strict. Behind closed doors they enjoy music, dancing, games and get together. They love to laugh and have a great sense of humor.

What are their beliefs?

They are traditionally Muslim by birth, but lately this has been more and more distant in their hearts. Although the majority profess to being Muslim and believing in the prophet Mohammed, it is speculated less than 10 percent of their population strictly follows the practice of Islam. Because of many disappointments with their current government and other hardships, their hearts are surprisingly open to other religions. They are not strict Muslims and very hungry to hear about the True God and His Love demonstrated through His Son.

Prayer Points

- Pray for the harvest of the Persian people, who are yearning for truth.
- Pray for a way for churches to meet legally and for religious freedom in their country.
- Pray for the believers in Iran, that they would be safe and grow in their relationship with Jesus.
- Pray the Lord would meet Persians in supernatural ways where missionaries cannot go.

Yemeni Arabs in Yemen

Prayer Card



Introduction / History

The social structure of the Yemeni Arabs consists of four classes of people: the Sayyid, or wealthy (who trace their decent to the grandson of Muhammad), the Qatani, (tribesmen), the Shafi'ite townsmen (merchants, artisans, and craftsmen), and the Akhdam (slaves).

The Yemeni Arabs have had a close association with Islam throughout their history; and today, nearly all of the Yemeni Arab (both in the Republic of Yemen, and in the other nations), are Muslims. About half of them are Zaydis Muslims, 40% are Shafi'ites, and 5% are Ismailis.

Info



7,764,000 in Yemen



Language - Arabic, Ta'izzi-Adeni



Largest religion - Islam (100%)

What are their lives like?

Yemeni Arab society is tribal in structure with over 1,700 different tribes or clans. These various tribes are ruled by sheiks (Arab chiefs), who often fight with each other.

Today, the majority of the Yemeni Arabs in Yemen still live in fortress-like villages that can be easily defended. Each house has windows on all sides and is built facing the outside of the village. All goods and persons passing through town are strictly controlled. In recent years, many of the nomads of Yemen have settled into mountain villages where they now raise grains, vegetables, coffee, melons, dates, mangoes, and pomegranates. Domestic animals are kept to supply milk and eggs.

Almost all Yemeni Arabs are Muslims. The Zaydis sect of Islam (part of the Shi'ite tradition) is quite fanatical in its form. Most of the Zaydis are warriors and perceive all wars to be a manifestation of Jihad (Muslim crusade against infidels; holy war).

What are their needs?

In many Muslim countries, Muslims who profess faith in Jesus Christ can be put to death. Evangelization efforts among them are challenging due to restrictions in many of the countries, and general antagonism to the Gospel.

Prayer Points

- Ask the Lord to call people who are willing to reach out and share the love of Christ with them.
- Pray that God will raise up faithful intercessors who will stand in the gap for Yemeni Arabs.
- Ask God to give Yemeni Arab believers opportunities to share the love of Christ with their own people.
- Pray that their traditional Muslim culture will soften, creating open doors for the Gospel to be preached among them.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to open the hearts of Arabs towards Christians so that they will be receptive to the Gospel.
- Ask the Lord to raise up strong local churches among Yemeni Arabs.

Tajiks in Takjikstan

Prayer Card



Introduction / History

The Tajiks of Central Asia are the oldest surviving people group in that region. Their homeland, Tajikistan, is the mountainous center of Asia, surrounded by the Asian republics of Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Kyrgyzstan. Tajikistan includes the Pamir Mountains, which reach altitudes of nearly 25,000 feet. Most of the people live in the parallel valleys below.

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Info



7,492,000 in Tajikistan



Language - Tajik



Largest religion - Islam (99.95%)

History

Tajiks have repeatedly been invaded and conquered throughout their history. The armies of Alexander the Great, the Arabs in the seventh century, Genghis Khan, the Turks, the British, and the Russian empire have all had a profound impact on these people. Many Tajiks have crossed over into Afghanistan and are still surrounded by war, ethnic violence, religious tension, and harsh living conditions.

What are their lives like?

Most Tajiks are mountain farmers and shepherds. Seasonal grasses create suitable pastures for raising sheep, goats, cattle, a few camels, and some horses. They also practice a remarkable system of terraced, mountainside irrigation so that wheat and barley can be grown at the higher, dry altitudes.

Women wear colorful national costumes with printed cottons and silks, accented by flowered head scarves. The men wear embroidered skull caps, and some wear turbans or fur hats during the cold winter months. The upper class and city dwellers tend to wear European style clothing.

What are their beliefs?

Nestorian missionaries first brought Christianity to the Tajiks during the 12th century. Today, Tajiks are Sunni Muslims of the Hanafite branch, although some Shi'ites exist. About one-tenth of the people are classified as non-religious. This has probably been a result of Russian atheistic pressure.

Tajiks tend to be spiritual people and are often open to at least a discussion of spiritual things. They understand the concept of sacrifice, which could be a redemptive analogy to the Lamb of God dying on the cross. However, almost all remain closed to the Gospel.

Prayer Points

- Pray that Tajiks would not judge Christianity just as a "Russian religion," but see their own need for salvation.
- Pray for an end to the persecution of believers by Muslim relatives who believe Christians betray their ancestors.
- Pray that new churches would have the finances to register. This is a very expensive process.
- Ask God to send revival to Penjikent (the radical Muslim center) where there are no Tajik believers.
- Ask God to raise up long-term missionaries who will go to Tajikistan and share Christ with Tajiks.
- Pray that the Holy Spirit will give vision for outreach and a genuine burden for the Tajiks to believers in this region.
- Pray that God will open the hearts of Tajik governmental leaders to the Gospel.
- Pray that God will call out prayer teams to begin breaking up the soil through worship and intercession.
- Ask the Lord to raise up strong local churches among Tajiks.