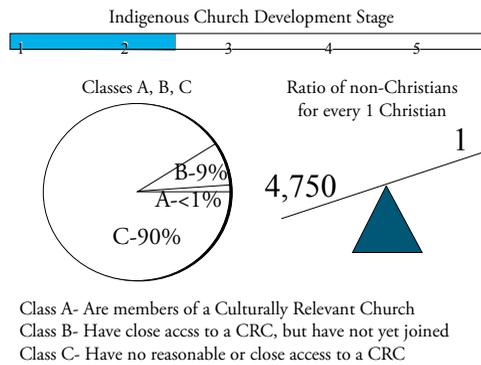




Quick Facts

Population: 3,800,000
 Afghanistan: 2,750,000
 Iran: 700,000
 Pakistan: 175,000
 Tajikstan: 15,000
Religion: Islam—Shia, Sunni
Believers: 0.02%
Scriptures: NT, OT
Ministry Tools: JRGT
Church Status: 2
Mission Status: 2
MS Subgroups: 15+



Identity: The Hazara descend from Mongol soldiers which intermarried with Persian tribes in the lowlands bordering the Hindu Kush, beginning in the 13th century A.D. The name Hazara is a Persian translation of the Mongol word *minggan*, which means “thousand,” and refers to the traditional Mongol kinship fighting unit.

Lifestyle: The Hazara were once primarily nomadic pastoralists. In the 1930s the Afghan government began to force them out of their lands, which were then occupied by Pashtun nomadic tribes. Forced into mountainous regions that could not support their population, the Hazara have either resorted to subsistence farming (mostly wheat) or have set up squatter camps near towns and cities. Leprosy is widespread among them. They are Central Asia’s poorest ethnic group.

Customs: Memory of one’s tribal lineage is of great importance for regulat-

ing marriage and clan alliances. Families can trace their male ancestry back eight generations. Hazara prefer to marry their first cousins on their father’s side, and seldom marry outsiders. If a Hazara woman marries an outsider, her children will not be considered Hazara.

Religion: The Hazara are primarily Shia Muslims, which are divided into two sects. The Ismaili sect is regarded as heretical, and its members are not considered Hazara by the Ithna Ashari. In the last century, the Pashtun sought to eradicate Hazara culture and Shiite Islam. Though the Shia tribes rebelled, there is an unknown number of Hazara which began to hide their ethnic identity, and declare themselves to be Uzbeks or Tajiks. Thus the actual number that have converted to Sunnism is still unknown. However, at least three tribes openly call themselves Sunni.

Christian Outreach: There has been increased openness among the Hazara,

and a significant response to the gospel among the refugees in Pakistan. In Afghanistan, outreach among them in Kabul has also seen fruit, and strong fellowships are established and growing. All together there are about two dozen discipleship groups with hundreds of members.

How to Pray:

✞ The Hazara have yet to have the Bible translated in their language, though most are able to understand the Dari New Testament, a closely related Persian dialect. Pray for the completion of the Dari Bible and for its possible adaptation into a Hazara version.

✞ The Hazara are only 5% literate. Pray for God’s blessing on an ongoing effort to put the entire Bible on audio cassette (20% complete thus far). Pray also for strategic use of the Jesus film, which though available, has only been viewed by less than 10% of the Hazara.

✞ The future of missionary work in Afghanistan and Pakistan is highly uncertain. Pray for the identification and equipping of dozens of Hazara pastors, evangelists and elders. Pray for unity among them and healing from centuries of inter-ethnic tribal feuding.

**Every year 34,000
 Hazara die
 without Christ.**