

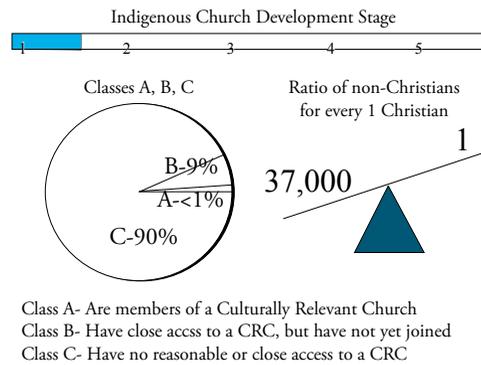
Kashmiri Muslims



Quick Facts

Population: 5,600,000
 India: 4,500,000
 Pakistan: 1,000,000
 United Kingdom: 100,000

Religion: Sunni Islam
Believers: 0.002%
Scriptures: NT, OT
Ministry Tools: JRT
Church Status: 1
Mission Status: 1
MS Subgroups: 30+
Mission Agencies: 10



Identity: The Kashmiri are a Dardic race, possibly related to the Nuristani and Pashai. Their language has been influenced by Indo-Iranian and Indo-Aryan languages such as Persian and Urdu. Similarities with Hebrews in language and culture lead some to believe they are one of the “lost tribes.”

Lifestyle: Kashmiri society is segmented in a similar way to Hindu society, and there are numerous endogamous communities. The Shaikh and Sayyids are at the top, the former engaged in business, and the latter serving as religious leaders, claiming direct descent from Muhammad. The lowest castes are the Teli (oil pressers), Hanji (boatmen and fishermen), and Machi (leatherworkers). In the middle are the cultivators which harvest rice, barley, oats, peeches and cheerries, as well as the world famous Cashmere wool.

Customs: The Kashmiri artisans are organized into guilds, with the medi-

eval European equivalent of apprentices, journeyman and masters. Products such as shawls, embroidery, rugs and carvings are manufactured at home or in small shops and taken to the city of Srinagar (famous for its lakes and houseboats), where dealers make a large profit selling them to tourists and exporters.

Religion: The majority of Kashmiri converted to Sunni Islam during the reign of an independent Muslim sultanate which ruled from 1346-1586. Sufi missionary orders played an important role, the most influential founded by Nunda Risshi, patron saint of Kashmir. Risshi combined elements of Buddhism and Hinduism to convert the masses, and even wrote a poem in praise of the Buddha. Today Kashmir has become an ideological battleground between Muslim secularists, traditionalists and revivalists (anti-sufiism).

Christian Outreach: Short-term missionary outreach by Indian evangelists

has been met with strong resistance. Following the 2005 earthquake in which 70,000 Kashmiris died, there has been renewed effort and opportunity to bring the gospel to Kashmiri Muslims on a long-term basis. A few fellowships have been established in urban centers, though rural areas (in which 90% of Kashmiri Muslims reside) are completely untouched.

How to Pray:

🙏 Pray for the efforts to update the 1899 Bible translation with modern language, as well as appropriate cultural and religious terminology.

🙏 Praise God for the encouraging response of hundreds of Kashmiri Muslim families which have enrolled in Bible correspondence courses. Pray for effective followup with these seekers.

🙏 Pray for peace along the Kashmiri “line of control” between India and Pakistan, which has known only strife for decades. Pray for an active witness on both sides of the border.

🙏 Only 10% of Kashmiri Muslims have seen the Jesus Film in Kashmiri. Pray for more outreach to rural areas by Indian teams.

Every year 50,000 Kashmiri Muslims die without Christ.