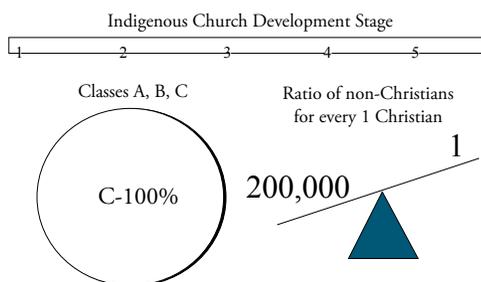


# Qashqai



## Quick Facts

**Pop. in Iran:** 1,600,000  
**Location:** Zagros Mountains  
**Lang. Family:** Turkic  
**Religion:** Shia Islam  
**Believers:** 0.0005%  
**Scriptures:** None  
**Ministry Tools:** GV  
**Church Status:** 0  
**Mission Status:** 1  
**Churches:** 0  
**Organizations:** 2  
**MS Subgroups:** 10+



Class A- Are members of a Culturally Relevant Church  
Class B- Have close access to a CRC, but have not yet joined  
Class C- Have no reasonable or close access to a CRC

**Identity:** The ethnogenesis of the Qashqai began in the 11th century when Turkish speaking tribes migrated from Central Asia to Iran. By the 18th century they had developed a strong tribal confederacy which included various ethnic clans from among the surrounding peoples that adopted the Qashqai language (including Kurds, Lurs, Gypsies, Arabs and Persians).

**Lifestyle:** The Qashqai were once primarily nomadic pastoralists until harsh measures by the Shah forced 30% of them to settle. Their grazing lands were confiscated and given to farmers, and many tribal leaders were executed. After the Iranian Revolution, many returned to nomadism, though a large number had already lost their herds. In addition to pastoralism, each nomadic clan also owns its own wheat and barley plantations, as well as orchards.

**Customs:** Qashqai women enjoy greater freedoms than women in other

Middle Eastern societies, nor are they devalued. Women are responsible for arranging marriages and contribute substantially to the family income through their expert weaving, and manufacturing of dairy products. They are also noted for their resistance to wearing the veil in public, and Qashqai society does not compel them to do so.

**Religion:** The Qashqai are Shia Muslims, which is the dominant Islamic sect in Iran. Due in part to their nomadic heritage, the Qashqai have a rather superficial observance of Islamic customs. Only a few observe daily prayers and Ramadan, and fewer still go on the Haj. An exception is the annual Day of Sacrifice, which has wider participation. There remains deep skepticism of Iranian clergy and *hajiis*, many of which loaned money to the Qashqai at high interest, bankrupting hundreds of families.

**Christian Outreach:** There are signs of

increased openness to the gospel among the Qashqai. Though outreach opportunities are limited, two mission organizations are now committed to full time ministry among them. An evangelistic video program called *God's Story* was recently translated into Qashqai, and the audio aired by Trans World Radio. The positive response confirms the reality that hundreds, and perhaps thousands of Qashqai are ready to be discipled as followers of Jesus.

## How to Pray:

☞ The Qashqai language is very close to Southern Azeri, which now has a Bible translation project in progress. Pray for the possible adaptation of this translation into Qashqai, and for the right translation team to be assembled.

☞ Intercede for the effective follow-up of all those who have expressed interest in following Jesus as a result of evangelistic media presentations. Pray especially for the *God's Story* project, which builds a foundation starting with Genesis.

☞ Many Qashqai have been evangelized by the local Armenian Church in Iran. Pray that God would use this ancient church, which is now experiencing revival, to

**Every year  
14,000 Qashqai die  
without Christ.**