

Nuristan in Afghanistan

A place hard to access

The most inaccessible of the Afghan provinces, Nuristan forms the backbone of the Hindu Kush mountain range in north-east Afghanistan. Snow-capped mountain peaks rising to 18,000 feet are linked by deep valleys where stone, mud and wood houses compete for space on the mountain slopes.

Difficult access and the long-time enmity with the neighboring Pashtun tribes has continued the isolation of the Nuristani peoples. The area remains almost completely undeveloped. There is no health care, very few functional schools and in many parts no vehicular access. Many villages are completely snowed in during the winter.

PRAYER REQUESTS

- ▶ *Pray for access for more workers, especially medical personnel, willing to serve in a tough place. Pray for understanding, wisdom and protection for workers.*
- ▶ *Pray for contacts with people of peace and honor who can open doors for the Gospel (Mt. 10:11).*
- ▶ *Pray for dreams and visions of Jesus to prepare the Nuristanis for his message.*

In 1865, two Pashtun believers risked their lives to take the Gospel to the animistic Nuristanis. Their message was greeted with enthusiasm, and the Nuristanis extended an invitation to teachers of the Good News to return and share more. Tragically, no one ever returned. Thirty years later, possibly using information given by the British, the Amir of Kabul invaded Nuristan, converting the people to Islam at sword-point.

In 2007, the area is still in dire need. Food production is insufficient, life-expectancy is low and the maternal mortality rate is among the highest in the world. Eastern Nuristan, a hiding place for the Taliban and al-Qaeda, is subject to frequent attacks, both on locals and on foreigners seeking to work there. Other areas are divided by distrust, blood-feuding, unforgiveness, banditry and the fear of spirits.

For more than 20 years, a desire to reach out to Nuristan has been growing. There is a vision to see feuding communities transformed by God's message of grace, love and forgiveness.



Nuristan Statistics

Population :
Estimates range from 100,000 to 300,000

Also pray for ...

- ▶ *The Taliban fighters in Afghanistan need Christ. Their extremism is misdirected. They need to catch the heavenly vision of Christ's kingdom. May they come to see that God's good and righteous will can really be done on earth as it is in heaven (Mt. 6:10).*