



The central Indian city of Nagpur (whose name means 'City of Snakes') has a population of over three million people. Nagpur lies on major north-south and east-west transportation routes. The city is at the geographic centre of India. While the majority of its inhabitants are Hindu, there is a sizeable Muslim minority of approximately 7.1% (215,000). Nominal followers of Jesus number around 5%, although practicing believers are much less numerous. In the region outside Nagpur city there are even fewer believers among the many Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists, and others. The governing political party in the area has a clear agenda to keep India as a Hindu nation and reject "foreign and Western" influences, making life hard for the local followers of Jesus.

Misconception: It is a commonly held misconception in the region that followers of Jesus bribe downtrodden Muslims and Hindus to accept Christ in return for material benefit or social advantage. Therefore actions by local believers motivated by love for Jesus Christ and one's fellowman are often misunderstood, presenting barriers for the Good News and discipleship. Often, those who do come to Christ are pressured into returning to Islam by various social, economic, emotional, and even physical pressures. Yet even in this hostile environment, Jesus is calling Muslims from Nagpur to Himself.

Muslims usually speak Urdu and Marathi while Hindus and others speak Hindi and Marathi. Between 2004 and 2006, several newer translations utilizing some "Muslim-style" terminology have been published. These have helped Muslims to understand, accept, and obey God's word. Nevertheless Bibles are not widely distributed nor are they easily accessible to the Muslim community. The "Jesus Film" also exists but there are distribution problems. As far as we know, there is no group of believers that regularly reaches out to the Muslims in this city with the Gospel in an organized way.

PRAYER REQUESTS

- ▶ *Pray for local believers to enter into their role as those who are part of God's plan to bless all nations, tribes and tongues (Gen. 22:18 and Galatians 3:16,29).*
- ▶ *Pray for the effective distribution of these new translations of the Bible.*
- ▶ *Pray for the local believers who face real persecution due to prejudices and misunderstandings.*
- ▶ *Pray for believers to be trained in how to proclaim the Messiah with wisdom and understanding in the Muslim community.*

MUSLIMS DO NOT BELIEVE ...

Muslims do not believe that it is possible to know God as in John 17:3. (They only believe that they can know about Him.) Small numbers of Muslims called Sufis believe in a mystical union with God. However, this group is often seen as heretical by many Muslims.

