The Hausa is the largest ethnic group in all of West Africa, numbering 26,641,000 in Nigeria, 7,704,000 in Niger, 294,000 in Cameroon, 205,000 in Chad, and a scattering in 12 other African countries.

Hausas have been heavily involved in long-distance trading for many centuries. Traders exchanged gold from the Middle East for leather, crafts and food. As a result, the Hausa language is one of the major trade languages.

By 1500, traders had introduced Islam to the Hausa. Many urban Hausas embraced Islam right away, hoping to enhance their businesses. However, villagers were not as receptive to this new religion.

In the "holy wars" of 1804 and 1808, the Hausa were conquered by the Fulani, their strongly Islamic neighbors. They were made slaves until the early 1900s. At that time, many villagers were either forced or bribed into becoming Muslims. They adopted some of Islam's basic outward behaviors and rituals, but they did not "sell out" as urban Hausas often did. For that reason, many rural Hausas today are only superficially Muslim.
ASSESSMENT
The Hausa culture is strongly linked to Islam, which makes it difficult to reach this people group with the gospel. Historically there has been conflict between Muslim and Christian Hausas, resulting in severe persecution of born-again believers.

Boko Haram, a terrorist group, has declared its intent to drive out all Christians from the area. Churches have been destroyed and many believers persecuted. Hundreds have been killed. Hausa believers take a great risk to openly proclaim the gospel.

APPEAL
Currently several African national churches are working among the Hausa. Overt witness is becoming increasingly difficult. In one year, a national fellowship had 30 churches in Hausa areas burned and one health clinic destroyed. Many believers have fled to safer areas, but others remain in an attempt to keep their land and be a witness of Christian grace.

Please join believers from throughout Hausa areas in prayer for their safety and wisdom in how to live out their Christian faith during these troubled days. Isaiah’s declaration gives us hope: “Strong peoples will honor you; cities of ruthless nations will revere you” (Isaiah 25:3).

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