

You have the opportunity to make a difference in Southwest Asia. Are you up for the challenge?

# Pashayi



*“Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?”*  
— Isaiah 43:19a —



The Pashayi, also spelled Pashai, whose population is between 400,000 and 500,000, live in the valleys of the Hindu Kush mountain range. The Pashayi often call themselves Kohistanis, meaning mountain people. Their language has many dialects, some of which cannot be understood by other Pashayi speakers. Most Pashayi earn their livelihoods from farming crops such as rice at lower elevations and wheat and maize at higher elevations, as well as from selling dried fruits and nuts. The Pashayi, a tribal people led by village councils, have a rich oral tradition of songs and folklore.



## Opportunities to Engage

Most Pashayi people live in isolated valleys a few hours north and northeast of Kabul. They are among the most untouched in Afghanistan by globalization and modernization. Their valleys are largely surrounded and controlled by conservative or Islamist groups such as the Taliban, so many Pashayi are suspicious of the urban trends they hear about. Outsiders, even Afghans from other provinces, cannot enter Pashayi communities without invitation and are rarely invited. As tight-knit, fishbowl communities, news of Pashayi-focused work will travel fast, even if the work is in cities among diaspora Pashayi. It can endanger anyone to be known to associate with foreigners.

A team focused on the Pashayi will need to think creatively about how to counter the beliefs that foreigners come to proselytize, ruin the morality of the people, and advance foreign governments' political and military agendas. The team's public work could include offering services that the Pashayi have a felt need in, for example: agricultural development; exporting nuts and dried fruits; providing medical services, such as clinics, community health training and medical worker training; and, educational opportunities, like teacher training or minority language primary instruction. Effective gospel ministry should avoid foreign-associated (especially Western) vocabulary, behavior, and forms. Evangelism and discipleship may best be done through 'shadow discipling,' that is, training Pashayi themselves to share in their Pashayi homelands where foreigners may never be able to go and share openly.

*I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.”*  
— Isaiah 43:19b —

## Ways to Pray

- Ask the Lord to call people who are willing to go and share Christ with the Pashayi of Afghanistan.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to soften and prepare the hearts of the Pashayi towards Believers so that they will be receptive to the Gospel.
- Ask the Lord to raise up a strong local church among Pashayi people.

Is God calling you to live among the Muslim peoples of Southwest Asia? Contact us. We would love to help you get there!