

The Daza of Niger and Chad

The Daza are a nomadic people living primarily in Chad and Niger as well as a few in Libya who claim to have originated in the area which is today known as Yemen. The language of the Daza is called Dazaga. With their "cousins", the Teda, the Daza form a larger group often referred to as the "Tubu", a term meaning "people of the Tibesti".

Traditionally, most Daza have lived by herding cattle, camels and goats. Some are merchants or Muslim teachers, and an increasing number are finding jobs as government employees. Most Daza outside of the towns live in tents in camps near sources of water and bits of pasture for their animals. They follow patterns of transhumance in order to find water and pasture. Generally the women and children remain behind in camp while the men travel with the herds. Each clan has its own brand for identifying cattle and camels. Daza camels are easily recognized by a unique ring attached to the bridle above the camel's nose.

The Daza are rather independent; there are tribal chiefs, and administrative chiefs, but identity seems to be strongest at the clan level. In some clans murder or livestock theft is not considered wrong as long as it is done to someone outside the clan. Allegiance is first to the family and clan unit, headed by the oldest male. This leaves wives in sometimes undesirable situations (because they do not belong to the family), and they subsequently need to exercise a certain amount of independence to look out for their own welfare. High bride prices and a complex network of agreements between families are in place to maintain some amount of family stability and social cohesiveness.



Primary Religion:
Islam, Folk Islam

Disciples (Matt 28:19):
0.002%

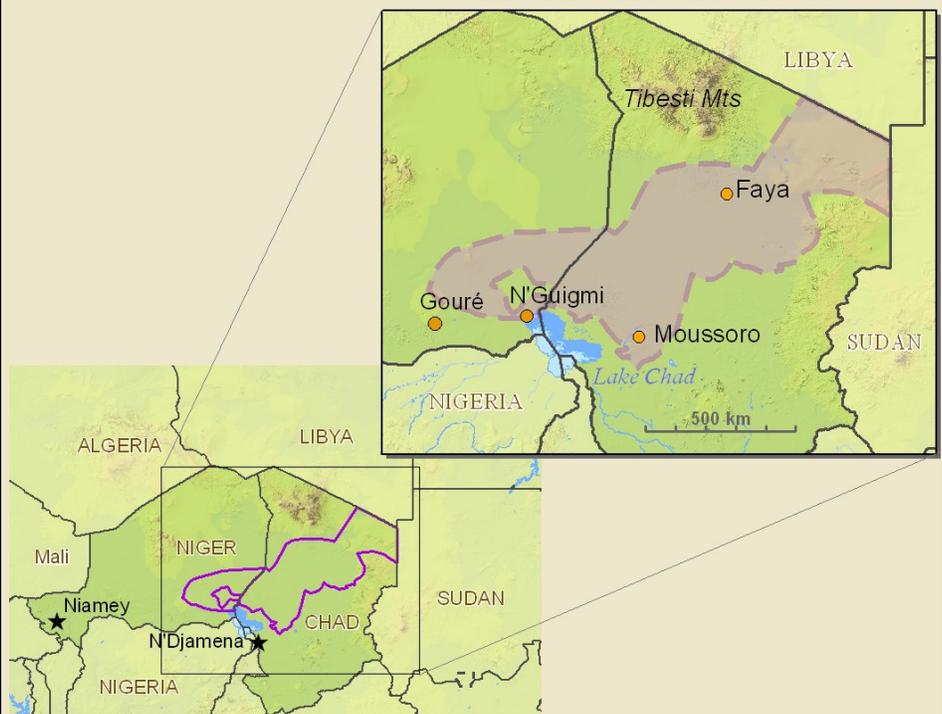
Churches:
None

Scripture Status (Matt 28:20):
NT in progress

Population (date):
100,000



DAZAGA HOMELAND



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Have They Heard The Gospel?

Believe in Jesus As God And Only Savior	0.002%
Have Not Heard Who Jesus is	Unsure
Response to the Gospel	There are two known believers in Niger among the Daza people, but no communities of believers.
Is The Word of God Translated?	Luke is in revised form and partly consultant checked; James and a few other books are in rough draft, but work is at a stand still with no qualified workers willing to help, due to peer pressure from fellow Muslims.
Hindrance to Scripture Distribution	There is religious freedom by law in Niger, but there are other hindrances. There are no Scriptures in print in Dazaga. Even if there were, the literacy rate in Niger among the Daza is very low—in Roman script little, but somewhat higher of Arabic script due to attendance at Koranic schools, but probably less than 1% overall.
Other Forms Of Gospel Presentation Available	Audio-visual: God's Story and The Jesus Film. Audio: some Gospel Recordings available by internet. In print: God's Story printed in 4 booklets using Roman script.
Cross-Cultural Missionaries Needed	Western missionaries are currently restricted from most areas in Niger where the Daza live. African missionaries are still allowed to move into these remote locations; strong Christians in teams of two families minimum is advised since they would normally be in areas without churches and far from the nearest church. They would have a better chance of starting a thriving church among the Daza if they were culturally sensitive and willing to lay aside cultural baggage and encourage a church among the Daza that did not violate Daza standards of modesty, as well as respect for elders and God.

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Group Description

Language/Linguistics

Bilingualism

Everyone in the group speaks Dazaga fluently, except perhaps children who grow up in urban N'Djamena and primarily hear Chadian Arabic. Chadian Arabic is the trade language and is spoken by those who spend time in urban areas. Dazaga functions as the trade language with the neighboring Kanembou, Zaghawa, and Teda groups. Those who have further schooling learn French and are able to use it for government jobs, NGO jobs, and for business. School is primarily taught in French, although more Arabic instruction is being introduced across the region. Villages have mixed languages on the frontiers: Kanembou towards the east, Teda towards the north, Zaghawa in the northeast, and Arabic in certain regions in the east.

Trade Language Used

Dazaga is the primary language and functions as a trade language with many neighboring groups. Chadian Arabic is also used for some trade, as well as French as needed.

Literacy

Literacy Attitude

Varies widely. Many are suspicious of their own language being written down if it's seen as an attempt at evangelization. Few desire to see literacy advance in their language: those who are literate already use French or Arabic to communicate.

Active Literacy Program

One primary school project is just being started. A few books have been published using a Latin-based script in both the Northern Dazaga dialect as well as those from the Southern dialects.

Publications in Mother Tongue

Vocabulary books, primers, proverbs, stories, and fables.

Economics

Subsistence type

Traditionally pastoralists. Some limited agriculture in regions towards the south with better soil and growing conditions. Dates are a large trade item from the northern regions. A caste of craftsmen known collectively as blacksmiths exists across the entire community. Trade is the primordial occupation and many in urban settings have become rich by Chadian standards through trade.

Modernization/Utilities

Cell phones have become common for those who travel into and out of urban areas. Some satellite phones are found by those of higher standing who travel into rural areas. TV and lights are embraced in urban areas. Running water remains limited but can be found in many urban areas.

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Community Development

Health Care	Poor
Comments	Few clinics and hospitals, with little understanding of how to use medicine and stay healthy.
Diet	Poor/fair
Comments	Millet and camel's milk form the basis of rural diets. Pasta, rice, and tomato paste are also common. Sugary green tea is shared during visits. Urban diets include some tomatoes and lettuce and fruit such as mangos and bananas. Meat is more frequently consumed in urban areas.
Water	Poor/fair
Comments	This is largely dependent on the context. Urban areas may have a water tower to provide some water pressure, but generally have no filtration or purification. Hand-pumped wells are common both in urban and rural settings.
Shelter	Nomads build simple homes out of reed mats and logs. Village dwellers may also have wooden frames covered with straw mats. Villagers and city-dwellers have mud-brick dwellings. Urban areas may also have some cement construction.
Electricity	Generators are used in urban situations. Solar panels are not frequently used.
Clothing	Men wear matching pants and long flowing tunics with turbans. Women wear long robes underneath a long cloth that wraps around the whole body. Women cover their heads with scarves at a minimum. Burqas are becoming more common in urban settings.
Transportation	Walking, horseback (for men), on donkeys (for women/ children), on camels, in vehicles.

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Status of Christianity

Church Growth

Number of pastors

There is one Dazaga speaking pastor, but he isn't reaching out to his own people.

Number of Missionaries Working

There is one local evangelist and wife (and family) who are reaching out to Dazaga speakers as well as other people groups in their town; they are cross-cultural missionaries from Niger. Another couple has been hoping to work among the Daza but is currently in the capital; perhaps they will be able to move to Gouré to work among the Daza sometime this year.

Number of Churches

None