



## Monthly Mission Focus: Nigeria



Western Africa, bordering the Gulf of Guinea, between Benin and Cameroon  
Area: total: 923,768 sq km – slightly more than twice the size of California

Population: 128,771,988 (2005 est.) Africa's most populous nation.  
Capital: Abuja 500,000.

Peoples: Over 490 ethnic groups. The triangular rivalry between the Hausa/Fulani, Yoruba and Igbo have dominated Nigerian politics since independence. Hausa and Fulani 29%, Yoruba 21%, Igbo (Ibo) 18%, Ijaw 10%, Kanuri 4%, Ibibio 3.5%, Tiv 2.5%  
Languages: English (official), Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo (Ibo), Fulani  
Religion: Persecution index 36th in the world. Muslim 50%, Christian 40%, indigenous beliefs 10%

### Answers to Prayer

- 🌍 The ending of a largely Muslim political dominance and the election of Obasanjo, a committed Christian believer. Opportunity is given for a new beginning for the country.
- 🌍 The spirit of prayer among Christians — stimulated by the political stresses of the recent past and by Muslim persecution in areas where there is a Muslim majority.
- 🌍 The dynamic growth of the Church has been spectacular.
- 🌍 The missions vision has blossomed despite economic distress.

### Challenges for Prayer

- 🌍 The unity of Nigeria. Pray for healing and reconciliation.
- 🌍 The introduction of shari'a law in northern Muslim states is a direct challenge to the federal government and a danger to national stability. Pray with Nigerian Christians for the preservation of national unity, the integrity of the federal constitution and for full religious freedom.
- 🌍 The culture of greed and corruption runs deep. Pray that Christian values and lifestyle may affect every area of national life and that Nigeria attain its potential as a light to the world for God.
- 🌍 Persecution in Nigeria's northern states between 1991 and 2000 led to the death of thousands of believers, murder of pastors and destruction of hundreds of churches in Kaduna, Gombe, Sokoto, Kano, Bauchi, etc.

*(Statistics are compiled from Operation World and CIA – The World Factbook 2005)*

## Hausa People of Nigeria

Is it Arabic, or Subsaharan African music? Someone who listens to the music of the Hausa people of northern Nigeria would find elements of both. One web site article, entitled, "Traditional Hausa Music of Nigeria," describes their music as a blending of the Arabic scale with West African drumming and call-and-response vocal and instrumental techniques.

The Hausa people have been heavily influenced by Arab Muslims, both in their musical style, and in their religious practices. With a population of 15 million, they are one of the most powerful people groups in Nigeria, Subsaharan Africa's most populous nations. Muslim beliefs, social pressure and persecution make it extremely difficult for a Hausa person or family to leave Islam. To make matters far worse, there is a continual political polarization between the Muslim and Christian people groups in that country that makes joining a Christian community seem like betraying one's own people. The Hausas have the entire Bible translated into their language, but only 10 percent of them can read. *(Global Prayer Digest – June 4, 2005)*

## Mumuye People of Nigeria

In the heat of the blazing Nigerian sun, the rhythmic pounding on a drum echoed through the village. A wooden hourglass-shaped drum with dried reptile skin stretched taut over its surface, sets the pace of the ceremony. A banjo-style instrument made from a gourd, animal hair, reptile skin, and leather, harmonized with the drum's beat and the jingling of anklets worn by the Mumuye people.

For the Mumuye people, an animistic people group, music is used more for religious expression than for melody and entertainment. In a funeral procession, they beat drums to frighten spirits away from the deceased. A few months after the burial, the deceased's skull is retrieved for a ritual to pass the spirit into the afterlife. During this ceremony they use the drums to deter evil spirits and preserve the goodness of the soul.

The Mumuyes, numbering slightly more than 500,000, attempt to appease spirits and worship ancestors through the use of dance and music. Although the New Testament is available in their Pungon and Zing dialects, the majority of the Mumuye people are unreached. *(Global Prayer Digest – June 5, 2005)*