History
Modern day Afghanistan came into being in 1747, when local Pashtun tribes united to fight for independence from the Persian Empire. The 19th and 20th centuries saw Afghanistan under British rule. Afghanistan fought numerous wars against the British during this time, resulting in the signing of the Rawalpindi Agreement in 1919, which recognised the independence of Afghanistan as a nation.

Afghanistan is an ethnically diverse country of many tribes and ethnic groups, the largest of which are the Pashtuns and the Tajiks. The capital city is Kabul, and the two official languages are Pashto and Dari Persian.

Government
Since the late 1970s, Afghanistan has experienced a continuous state of war, including major occupations in the forms of the 1979 Soviet invasion, a Pakistani military intervention in support of the Taliban in the late 1990s and the October 2001 US-led invasion that overthrew the Taliban government. The rule of interim governments and elections continue to be disrupted by the violence, but the country is led by President Karzai, who was elected democratically in 2001.

Social Issues
Afghanistan's population is an estimated 29 million. The country has one of the world's lowest average life expectancies of 45 years.1 According to the Human Development Index, Afghanistan is the second least developed nation in the world. UNICEF estimates that 80% of females and 50% of males lack access to education centres. The national literacy rate is 34%, although just 10% for females.

THE WAY TV Viewership
Data is not available, although in 2011 THE WAY TV received over 600 responses from viewers in Afghanistan to its Dari and Farsi language programmes.

Religion
Islam is the state religion and conversion from Islam is illegal. Specific figures for the Christian

population in Afghanistan do not exist, as most Christians practise in private to avoid persecution and social pressure. The estimated Christian population ranges from 500-8000, according to various International Church-affiliated humanitarian groups in the area.2

Prayer Points

Pray for a unified Afghan effort towards rebuilding their country.
Pray for increased tolerance towards Christianity within Afghanistan, so that believers may worship openly and freely.
“Dear THE WAY TV. I accepted Christianity and now I am a disciple of this religion but I have a big problem with my family. They don't agree with my faith and they’ve said that they will never accept me as a member of the family. I am in a really difficult situation and I need your help.” ASHEK MASIH from Afghanistan