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Global Prayer Digest

April-June 2020 • Frontier Ventures

39:4-6

Global Prayer Digest

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The Frontier People Groups Part 12 *Highly Unreached Prestigious Communities*

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Dear Praying Friends,

We are finishing up our Year of the Frontier months with a month of prayer for high caste Hindus. (This 13-month time period is covering the largest and most unreached 400 people groups.) Next month most of the same types of people groups will be in our prayers as well. We will begin this month with 10 separate Brahman (intellectual and priestly) groups before moving on to the other two “forward castes” Kshatryas (rulers and military communities) and Vaishyas (business communities).

Frankly, efforts to reach these privileged “forward” castes have usually failed in the past because people have tried to approach them the same way they approach other Indian communities. Who is willing to try to find common ground with the forward castes before dealing with more spiritually controversial issues like the centrality of Jesus Christ? Finding common ground is essential if you want to influence anyone.

Pray that the 2020s will be the decade of great progress in taking Christ to India’s prestigious and influential forward castes.

In Christ,

Keith Carey, editor-in-chief, *GPD*

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April 2020

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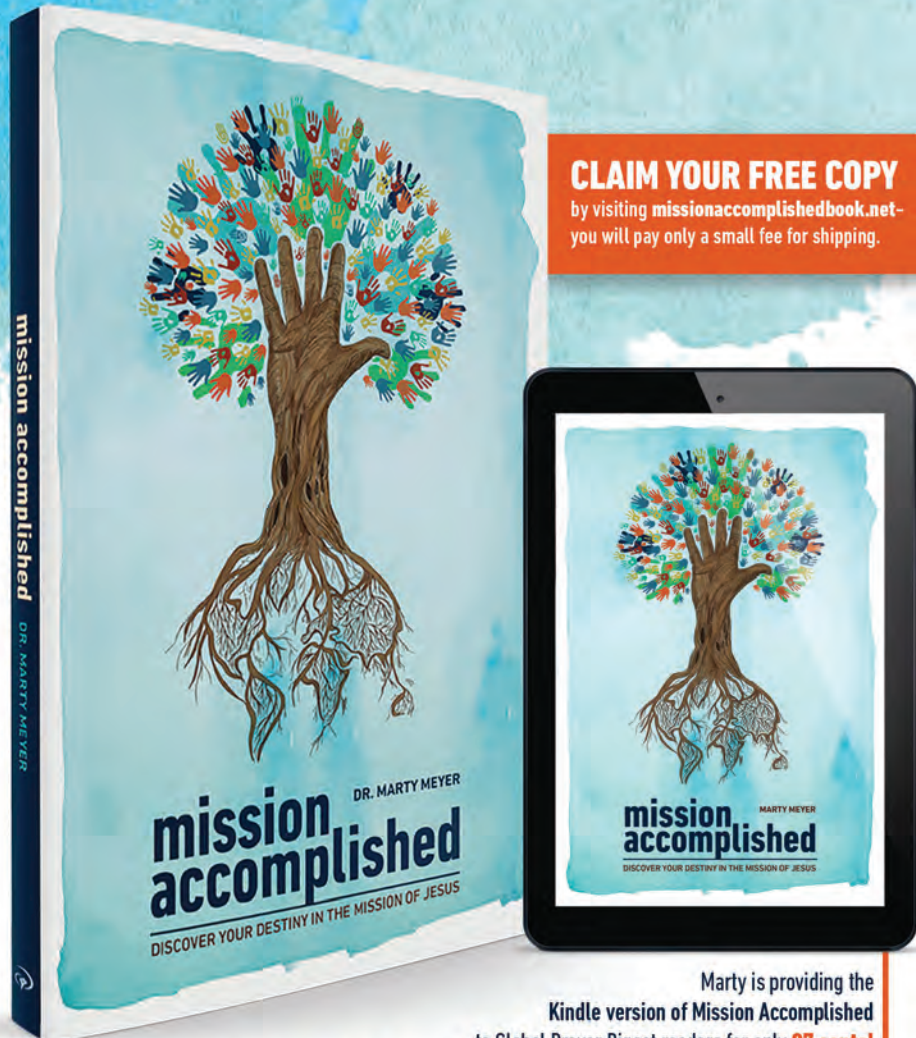
PRAY FOR *God's Blessing for Every Forward Caste Community*



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Devotional Ideas

How can you make the most of these prayer materials:

- Use them as a supplement to your regular devotional time.
- Pray around the dinner table with the entire family.
- We encourage you to gather monthly with friends who are involved in this movement.
- Take it with you when you exercise and pray for a disciple-making movement for the listed people group

India's Topsy-Turvy Caste System



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When do those at the top wind up at the bottom, and those at the bottom wind up at the top? When you have one person with one vote! Traditionally the “forward” (meaning privileged or high prestige) castes of India held almost all the wealth and political power. Since independence from England in 1947, the much more numerous “backward” (meaning oppressed or low status castes) have gained political and economic clout. In many cases, this has meant more power and higher paying jobs for those who were formerly disenfranchised. But there are all kinds of complications, as you will see as you read this article.

Before we go any further, let's start by defining the three “forward” castes of Hinduism that we will pray for this month. There are four basic caste groupings, and the first three are what Indians call “forward” (high prestige) castes. At the top are the Brahmans, who were traditionally priests, but many have since moved on to much more lucrative work like computer engineering, medicine, and business. Secondly, there are the Kshatriyas, the ruling/military caste. The best known of these are

the Rajputs, who took on the role of military officers, knights, and soldiers for hundreds of years. Bollywood has many movies about their military exploits. Though some Rajputs have wealth today, many lost it when they lost their vast estates soon after independence. The third caste, the Vaishyas, are the most ironic. They are the business caste, and many have much wealth. They are also more likely to be reformers because they resent the higher prestige held by Brahmans and Kshatriyas. Baniyas are among the best known of the Vaishyas. Mahatma Gandhi, India's well-known reformer, was a Bania. If you have stayed at a motel in the West, you probably rented your room from a Patel, another Vaishya subcaste.

Why Forward Castes Have Not Responded to the Gospel

One thing these forward castes have in common is that they have shown very little response to the gospel through the centuries. There are several reasons for this. One reason is theological. A devout Hindu who believes in reincarnation believes that they are closer to reaching nirvana, the blissful state of blinking out of existence, if they perform their caste duties well. Turning to other gods and another religious system would cause them to face a much worse reincarnation in the next life.

Probably the more important reason for not responding to the gospel is social. The people who have responded to the gospel since St. Thomas arrived in southern India 2000 years ago have almost always been members of the lower caste and outcaste groups. A forward caste individual would not want to have social interaction with those from these communities. Nor would a backward caste congregation welcome someone from the forward caste. After all, the forward castes control everything else in their lives, and the church is the only thing they control. Thirdly, to members of the backward castes, Jesus Christ offered a way out of a life of social stigma and poverty. To the forward castes, He only offered an opportunity to lose power and prestige.

Poverty and Affirmative Action

In some cases, wealth and power are only an illusion for India's forward castes. Some high caste people live below the poverty line and 30 percent

are illiterate. Efforts to aid such people have been limited by India's constitution. That document forbade economic aid to people from the forward castes. In 1991 Prime Minister Narashima Rao tried to get around that provision in the constitution. He led the Congress Party in creating a 10 percent reservation of jobs for the poor among the forward castes. That new law was quickly challenged. In 1992 India's Supreme Court heard the Sawhney Case. The court ruled that the government couldn't reserve government jobs or university seats for members of the forward castes by passing a law. They ruled that such an act would require a constitutional amendment. But there was a loophole in the constitution. That document didn't prevent state governments from establishing affirmative action to aid the poor among the forward castes. A decade ago, Kerala and Tamil Nadu led the way in having affirmative action for poor members of forward castes.

One of the reasons why poverty has become a problem among India's forward castes is because the affirmative action programs only aid the lower castes. Such programs have existed since India's independence in 1947. Today only 50 percent of India's university seats are available in open competition; the rest are reserved for members of the lower castes. Some politicians want to end affirmative action entirely. In recent years the national government, now controlled by a Hindu nationalistic political party known as the BJP, passed the 124th amendment to India's constitution. This amendment extends affirmative action to poor members



iStockDeepak Sethi

of forward castes. The amendment will become law if it is ratified by 50 percent of India's states. At the time of this writing, we don't know if it will pass.

Ten percent of the population owns 60 percent of India's wealth. Affirmative action hasn't reduced such inequality. In fact their willingness to allow people to hold special privilege rather than rise up because of personal merit is holding their economy back.

Ways to Reach the Forward Castes

Government quotas only apply to government run schools, not private ones. Indian Christian educators can start private colleges that teach needed job skills to anyone who attends them, including forward caste individuals. Likewise, Christian-owned businessmen can establish companies in India, creating an environment that will allow believers to interact with those from the forward castes.

Furthermore, there might be ways to bypass the opposition to the gospel among forward caste individuals. What if believers helped establish Hindu-background believers in fellowships where they used Hindu cultural music and worship forms that would not seem so foreign or "backward caste" to them? There is the risk of blending gospel truths with error, so believers would need to make sure the teachings are biblically based in order to make it work. But with almost no breakthroughs among the many forward castes, things have to be done differently!

Let's Pray!

- Ask God to inspire faithful workers to find creative, Holy Spirit inspired ways to reach out to India's forward castes within their culture.
- Pray for the Lord to reveal Himself to members of every forward caste and send them believers to share the ways of Jesus.
- Pray for a movement to Christ among every forward caste in the 2020s.
- The BJP would like to grant more favoritism to the Hindu majority, so pray that religious freedom remains the law in India.

ROM 3:20, NLT

For no one can ever be made right with God by doing what the law commands. The law simply shows us how sinful we are.

Pray for the Holy Spirit to convict the Bhumihar of their guilt before God and their need for His forgiveness.

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Bihar

When is a Brahman not a Brahman? The Bhumihar people of northeast India have been lobbying and working for Brahman status for the past two centuries. First, they worked with the British colonial government and since 1947, with the Indian government. The Brahmans are the highest caste in the Hindu system. With Brahman status come the highest privileges and responsibilities of the Hindu religion. Many other Brahmans have often deemed the Bhumihar as Kshatriyas or rulers from the second caste, or even Shudras, common workers from the fourth caste of Hinduism.

Today the Bhumihars hold high positions in Indian society. They are physicians, engineers, scientists, politicians, business leaders, and university professors. They own large tracts of land farmed by lower castes. Most Bhumihars live in India's poorest state of Bihar. The Bhumihar do not live in poverty but are among Bihar's wealthiest citizens. They have been resistant to the claims of Jesus Christ.

Pray that the Lord will give Bhumihar families and communities understanding and responsive hearts as they hear about Christ. Pray for the Bhumihar people to be delivered from their fear of giving Christ their allegiance. Help them to embrace God's blessing through His word for their people. Pray that movements to Jesus will sweep through Bhumihar families, permeating their community from within.—DK

DESHASTHA BRAHMANS

Most people have heard of the Roman Empire and the more recent British Empire. However, how many of us have heard of the Maratha Empire (1674-1818)? This empire dominated the Indian subcontinent during the 18th century. The Deshastha Brahmans were the chief administrators, military officers, and governors of the Maratha Empire. The Maratha Empire was the main cause of the fall of the powerful Mughal Empire. The Maratha Empire fell to the British and their allies in 1818. Not surprisingly, Deshastha Brahmans became a source of administrators and military officers for the British Raj. The Deshastha were originally located in west-central India. They spread out across India when they took positions offered by the British colonial rulers.

Today the Deshastha Brahmans occupy a prestigious place in Indian society, especially in the west-central Indian state of Maharashtra. They are physicians, engineers, scientists, business leaders, and politicians. Since they have such a high place in society and in the Hindu religious system, they are hesitant to investigate the message of Jesus Christ.

Pray that the Lord moves many Deshastha to hunger and thirst for spiritual truth. Pray that a strong movement to Jesus will bring whole Deshastha families and communities into a rich experience of God's blessings. Pray for laborers to sow God's word to persons and households of peace.—DK



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IS 53:6, NLT

All of us, like sheep, have strayed away. We have left God's paths to follow our own. Yet the Lord laid on Him the sins of us all.

Pray that the Lord helps the Deshastha see that they have gone astray and need the forgiveness of the one true God.

GAUR BRAHMAN

IS 57:15, NLT

The high and lofty one who lives in eternity, the Holy One, says this: “I live in the high and holy place with those whose spirits are contrite and humble. I restore the crushed spirit of the humble and revive the courage of those with repentant hearts.”

Pray that the Gaur will repent and believe in the Holy One of Israel.

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Why are the Brahman of India so resistant to the gospel? The Gaur Brahman are one of the more prominent Brahman subdivisions. The Brahman make up about five percent of India’s total population. The Brahman are the highest varna or caste in the Hindu system. The vast majority of the converts to Christianity in India are from the lower castes and even from those peoples below the caste system. The Gaur were originally priests and religious teachers who served in the courts of the kings of north India. For their service they were given land and titles of nobility.

Today the Gaurs are a diverse people scattered over the nation of India. Some are still teachers and priests of the Hindu religion who lead temples and religious festivals. Other Gaur Brahman are business leaders, engineers, scientists, university professors, and politicians. They speak the local languages of the area where they live plus English and Hindi.

Pray that the Lord will work in the hearts of the Gaur to humble them and make them open to the claims of Jesus Christ. Pray that God will send high caste background believers to befriend and share the gospel with the Gaur Brahman leading to a movement to Christ.—DK

KANAUJIA BRAHMANS

You may know very little about India’s complex caste system. However, you would probably recognize two terms, “Brahman”



A Brahman woman

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and “untouchable,” the two extremes of the caste system. Brahman are the elite of the system, fulfilling the roles of priests, teachers, and keepers of the sacred traditions of Hinduism. They take the lead in all Hindu religious celebrations and festivals. They are those who are able to expand their horizons into lucrative businesses, especially involving technology.

The Kanaujia Brahman live mostly in north central India, although smaller numbers live in the western and eastern side of the country. They live dual lives—one secular and one religious. Most are well educated and often hold professional careers. They give their women higher status than many other South Asian communities. Many Kanaujia Brahman are well versed in the Vedas which contain the earliest Hindu writings dating back to 1500 BC. They interpret the religious teachings for the Hindu masses.

Pray that the Kanaujia Brahman will be spiritually troubled enough to seek and find answers in Jesus Christ. Pray for the Lord to send them the right people to introduce them to Jesus Christ. Pray for a disciple-making movement among them this decade.—JS

ZECH 9:9, NET

Rejoice greatly, daughter of Zion! Shout, daughter of Jerusalem! Look! Your king is coming to you: He is legitimate and victorious, humble and riding on a donkey—on a young donkey, the foal of a female donkey.

Pray that the Kanaujia Brahman will seek and find the Savior and be transformed by His humility and love.

RADHI BRAHMANS

GEN 18:14, NLT

Is anything too hard for the Lord?

Pray that this very month, the Lord will get through to the Radhis and other Brahman communities.

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Brahman priest

“Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall...” (Pro 16:18). This truth could well be applied to

the Radhi Brahmins. Because their caste is the elite in the Hindu caste system, it is easy to fall into this very human difficulty. Probably nothing is more humbling than admitting one’s sinfulness and confessing the need for a sinless Savior.

The Radhi live in the eastern part of India and speak Bengali. We know very little specifics about the Radhi and how they differ from other Brahmins except that they are divided into two clans, Nageswara and Kashyap.

How can we reach the Radhi? Perhaps it may be possible to reach them through their children and young adults. Indians are very technologically proficient. The internet is available to them, and it is very possible that some inquisitive minds will explore and find resources that are available to them through their computers and can lead them to faith in the Savior.

Pray that many, especially the youth, will discover these resources and have an understanding that will lead them to commit their lives to Christ. Pray for many to come together to worship Him and disciple others in His ways.—JS

SANADHYA BRAHMANS

You may be wondering by now why there are so many different castes named Brahmins. Isn’t a Brahman a Brahman?

The difference in names often refers to the region of India where they live. But there are also subtle differences in some of their beliefs and practices. Sometimes there are historical reasons or issues regarding their clans.

The Sanadhya Brahmins are the elite Brahmins whose lives are most dedicated to Hindu practices. Some are the dedicated holy men that are sometimes observed living as hermits in the forest. They may also serve as heads of ashrams, religious retreat centers. As priests, it is their duty to teach the doctrines of the Hindu faith to those beneath them in status.

Pray for the Holy Spirit to open the spiritual eyes of the Sanadhya Brahmins to see the true light of the world, Jesus Christ. Pray that Holy Spirit-ordained believers will reach out and begin redemptive relationships with Sanadhya Brahmins. Pray that this influential Brahman group will teach others about the Savior, and form fellowship groups that will lead to other fellowship groups. Pray that their families will be blessed with the love of Christ.—JS



Brahmins

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JOEL 1:14, NET

Announce a holy fast; proclaim a sacred assembly. Gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land to the temple of the Lord your God and cry out to the Lord.

Pray for the Sanadhya Brahmins to cry out to the Lord and decide to follow Him alone.

SARASWAT BRAHMANS

EX 10:3, NET

So Moses and Aaron came to Pharaoh and told him, "Thus says the Lord, the God of the Hebrews: 'How long do you refuse to humble yourself before me? Release my people so that they may serve me!'"

Pray that the Saraswat Brahmins will humble themselves before the King of kings!

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Most ancient people groups developed their lives and cultures around the great rivers of the world. Most famously, the ancient Egyptians were able to develop an advanced society along the Nile River Valley. The same thing was true in China with its vast rivers. Such is also the case with the

Saraswat Brahmins of northern India who originally lived along the shores of the Saraswat River. They are considered among the oldest and most widespread Brahmin communities in India. As the river began to dry up and move underground, the Saraswat migrated away from the original area.

This we can know. If they are Brahmin, then their spiritual needs are similar to other Brahmin communities. Though they are taught from birth that they are in a privileged spiritual position, they need a savior just like the rest of us.

Pray that God will prepare a way for Christ followers who want to reach the Saraswat Brahmins to gain entry into their communities and be given the opportunity to introduce them to the sin-forgiving Savior. Pray for thousands to come together to learn the word and teach it to others. Pray that as they learn to follow the Lord, the Saraswat Brahmins will be blessed with peace, joy, and love in their families.—JS

SAWARIA BRAHMINS

(This story illustrates truths about this people group.)

Athari, a Brahmin priest living in Delhi, was

responding to a request from his friend, Jaydeb, to perform the seven Vedic rituals of the fire ceremony for his daughter's wedding. "I will read the Vedic scriptures in Sanskrit. That will bring honor to our gods and will bless your daughter's marriage." Jaydeb commented, "Athari, people here do not understand Sanskrit." Athari explained, "It's true; Sanskrit is a dead language. But these are our traditions. My sons are studying at the universities to be doctors. Like me, they know some of the Vedas, but like so many Brahmins, they have no interest in working as priests."

There are over four million Sawaria Brahmins residing throughout India. As priests their salaries are modest so many of them earn their primary living through professional occupations and political positions. Many still maintain daily rituals and perform Hindu ceremonies.

Pray that these Hindu priests will recognize that there is only one true God. He is known through His word that is for all people and nations. Pray for the Lord to send them His chosen ambassadors to help them begin their own Brahmin-based disciple-making movement.—PD



Brahmin reading the Vedas

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ROM 10:9, NIV

If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

Pray for many from the Sawaria Brahmin community to receive the gift of faith and share it with others.

TAMIL BRAHMANS

JAS 4:6, NET

But He gives greater grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud, but He gives grace to the humble."

Pray for the Holy Spirit to give supernatural grace to Tamil Brahmins so they can accept that they need a savior.

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A Tamil Brahmin priest

(This story illustrates truths about this people group.)

Celina watched her mother place a bamboo pole covered with turmeric paste outside the door of their beautiful home in Chennai, India. Her mother then prayed to Kula Devata seeking blessings for Celina's wedding

which would take place the next day. This was the beginning of the Hindu Tamil wedding rituals. Celina knew every detail had been carefully planned. Her father was a highly respected Tamil Brahmin politician. She and her brothers were all university graduates and her husband to be was a well-known doctor from a prominent Tamil Brahmin family. Soon her aunts and grandmothers would arrive with bowls of grains. They would put the pots in water and seek the blessing of the deities. This gesture invoked the gods to bless Celina and her husband with great wealth and abundance in their marriage.

With a population of about 525,000 in India, the Tamil Brahmins are proud of their heritage. In addition to being the chief Hindu temple priests, they are usually well educated and serve in professional and governmental positions. Some feel they are better than others because of their high position.

Pray for a movement to Christ among Tamil Brahmins that will bless their families and spread to other communities.—PD

TELUGU BRAHMANS

(This story illustrates truths about this people group.)

"Why is this water well still here?

The Telugu

Brahmin professor who dug it left three years ago! He would not let anyone who was not Brahmin use the water, and if a non-Brahmin student touched him, he would immediately wash with the water in the well." Students, teachers and others were shouting their complaints to the administrator of the University of Hyderabad in Andhra Pradesh, India. In defense, the administrator said with a calming voice, "He took his position as a priest seriously and needed the water for his ritual use. But since the well is not being used and seeing it is causing ill feelings, we will see about removing it." Some of the crowd shouted, "Good!"

Numbering over 1,000,000 people, Telugu Brahmins proudly adhere to their Brahmin status, and they faithfully carry out their duties as priests. Like many other Brahmins, they have pursued vocations that require higher education and encourage their children to do the same.

Pray for Telugu Brahmins to understand the surpassing greatness of Christ and teach others that He is worthy of exclusive devotion. Pray for Telugu Brahmins to lead many Telugu speakers into a movement to Christ this decade.—PD

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PHIL 2:3, NET

Instead of being motivated by selfish ambition or vanity, each of you should, in humility, be moved to treat one another as more important than yourself.

Pray for the Lord to raise up Brahmin believers who will walk in humility before God and man, drawing others to the Lord in the process.

BHAT COMMUNITY

1 PET 5:5 NET

In the same way, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. And all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.

Pray for Bhat elders to have the humility to seek Christ and the courage to steer others to His throne of grace.

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like sheep without a shepherd. He said to his disciples, “The harvest is great, but the workers are few. So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask Him to send more workers into His fields.” Matt 9:36-38 NLT

As Jesus spoke to His disciples about the great crowds they encountered throughout their journeys in Galilee, He expressed His love for the lost peoples of this world. Throughout India, the number of Bhat people has been nearly 1.4 million with no known followers of Christ among them. They need to spend time with loving believers who have Christ’s compassion for the lost multitudes.

The Bhat are predominately a landowning community of Hindus who live throughout much of India and three neighboring countries. They work in temples where they practice *phakra*, which is the poetic praise of others, and they speak in more than 40 languages. They generally avoid manual labor and their literacy rate is low, especially among their women.

Pray that the Bhats receive the gospel in clear audio and spoken word presentations. Pray that these unreached people will be called by the Lord through their clans and families.—JY

GUJARATIS IN THE UK

Among the 631,000 Gujaratis living in the UK, hundreds of thousands are named Patel. It’s the UK’s most common Indian surname. The name Patel originates from India’s northwest state of Gujarat, and it indicates a higher economic status.



Monkeybusinessimages

Patels, along with Gujaratis of other surnames, are among the most prosperous immigrants in the UK. Though their primary language is Gujarati, they have taken on the English language and western dress; they also strive for a western version of success. Living mainly in cities like London and Manchester, Gujaratis often own businesses such as restaurants and shops. As they’ve become more educated, many UK Gujarati people work as professionals in medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, and IT.

Though the UK’s Gujaratis, especially the youth, have learned British culture, they typically follow traditions such as marrying within their own people. They also continue in religions of their Indian ancestry—almost two-thirds follow Hinduism, while about 30 percent are Muslim. Very few Christians are found among them.

On this Easter Sunday, ask the Lord to raise up faithful prayer teams for Gujaratis in the UK. Pray for British believers to intentionally befriend Gujaratis and reach out to their families. Pray that many Gujaratis come to Christ, leading to disciple-making movements that bless Gujarati communities throughout the UK and beyond.—CR

JER 9:23B-24A, NLT

Don’t let the wise boast in their wisdom, or the powerful boast in their power, or the rich boast in their riches. But those who wish to boast should boast in this alone: that they truly know me and understand that I am the LORD who demonstrates unfailing love. . .

Ask the Lord to break through the mentality of worldly success and cultural traditions of the UK’s Gujarati people. Pray that Gujaratis throughout the United Kingdom repent and turn to Jesus so that they only boast in God and His goodness.

LINGAYATS

COL 2:18, NET

Let no one who delights in false humility and the worship of angels pass judgment on you. That person goes on at great lengths about what he has supposedly seen, but he is puffed up with empty notions by his fleshly mind.

Make this your prayer for the Lingayats of India.

ShivaiStocksalko3p



A Lingayat offering to Shiva

representing the god Shiva, whom they worship in a monotheistic fashion.

The Lingayats came into being by the efforts of a philosopher and social reformer named Basava. His teachings ran against the caste system, and he hoped to eventually form a casteless society. Basava went so far as to allow the marriage of a Brahman woman to an untouchable man. Sadly, his noble experimental society did not last, and it eventually regressed back into a social hierarchy much like the ones Basava wanted to replace.

The Lingayat are found mostly in Karnataka, where they comprise the majority, though significant groups can be found elsewhere as well. They refrain from drinking. They hold many occupations, from priests and artisans to agriculture or government work. One can be a Lingayat and also keep ties with other religious systems, even Christianity.

Pray for a movement of discipleship and evangelism to spread throughout the Lingayat communities, and that they would discover a casteless life in Christ. Pray for future Lingayat believers to show Hindu India the way to the one true God.—BK

KAPU REDDI PEOPLE

The Kapu Reddi live mainly in Andhra Pradesh, and largely on the coast. The term Kapu refers to those who own land, while leaders of the villagers are known as Reddi. Thus, the Kapu Reddi are a social grouping of leading landowners among the agricultural people of the area, and they have a great deal of power, both financially and socially, and represent only a small percentage of the total state population.



Andhra Pradesh

The castes of India are separated into two broad categories – forward and backward. The forward castes are those who do not qualify for government aid and comprise approximately 25 percent of the population. It is in this category that the Kapu Reddi fall today, though they once qualified as backward. In 2016, the Kapu began a violent protest, demanding a return to their former status, so they could regain their government aid.

The Kapu Reddi are primarily Hindu, with some Buddhists among them. We know of no communities of Christ followers among them.

Pray that the Kapu Reddi would discover identity and authority in Jesus Christ. Pray for an openness to the gospel, and a wave of church planting and spiritual growth. Pray for peace between the Kapu Reddi and the government, and for their economic needs to be met.—BK

PHIL 2:8, NET

He humbled Himself, by becoming obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross!

Pray that the Kapu Reddi people will hear of Christ's humble sacrifice and be willing to give Him a chance to transform their communities.

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ARAKH PEOPLE

COL 3:12, NET

Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with a heart of mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience...

Pray that soon the Arakh community will be transformed by the Lord in such a way that they will be known for kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.

iStock/Sahil Miyani



(This story illustrates truths about this people group.)

Suresh could not believe what his grandfather had just told him.

"Our people

actually sacrificed horses to show how tough they were? Weren't horses exactly what every military force needed to win?" Grandfather glared at the teenager and shot back, "Yes, we had a great empire that included Delhi itself. No other kingdom could defy us. And by sacrificing horses, everyone knew we had a big enough cavalry to defeat any army at any time."

Suresh and his grandfather are from the Arakh people. They have a Rajput background, and their ancestors did hold Delhi at one time, a great accomplishment. In 918, their military leader, Maharaja Tilok Chand Arkawanshi, took Delhi by force, which is a military feat the Arakh people are still proud of. He built a temple to worship the sun.

Today, the Arakh people have little to be proud of; they are usually poor farmers and small shop owners. They still worship the sun along with Shiva, a key Hindu deity. They live in northwestern Uttar Pradesh, a state where about one in 1,000 bows their knee to the King of kings.

Pray that the Arakh people will humble themselves before the King of kings and thank Him for creating the sun. Pray for their families to be blessed by a disciple-making movement.—KC

KHATRI PEOPLE

(This story illustrates truths about this people group.)

Ananya worked late into the night, sewing many colored beads on the beautiful purple silk woven by her for her wedding sari.

Ananya's Khatri people migrated many years before her birth from neighboring Punjab, a region that straddles eastern Pakistan and northwestern India. Her ancestors became shop owners, industrialists, silk weavers, agriculturists, breeders, and transporters. They have much influence in northwest India.

Her eldest brother and her mother chose whom she would marry, since her father was deceased. She had not yet been permitted to meet him. That would come at the accepted time within their Hindu culture. The gods would know when the wedding should occur. Ananya wondered why her wedding plans were so different than the plans of her friend, Mehar, whose name meant "grace." Mehar's family worshiped only the God they called Jehovah. Mehar would marry Abad. His name means "eternal, everlasting father." She wondered about the meanings of their unique names and their different God. Her people worshiped and feared many gods. Mehar and Abad worshiped only one. Why? Could Mehar's God be enough?

Pray for Khatri people, who are so gifted and intelligent, yet missing the most important decision of their lives — their eternal destiny. Pray that this will be the decade when thousands get disciplined to follow the Lord.—KH

iStock/JohnnyGreig



EX 34:6, NET

And He passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness..."

Pray for the Khatri people to seek and find this God!

SONAR PEOPLE

ACTS 19:24, NLT

It began with Demetrius, a silversmith who had a large business manufacturing silver shrines of the Greek goddess Artemis. He kept many craftsmen busy.

Pray for the Holy Spirit to penetrate the heart of people like Demetrius in India and turn them to the ways of the Lord.



This Gold statue of Ganesh was probably formed by a Sonar.

Sonar people are spread over 33 states, and these goldsmiths speak 61 languages. Since they have wealth, they also have liberty to take advantage of higher education. Some work in government and educational institutions or in money lending operations. They are also tailors, car repairmen, and retailers. The Sonars are well respected as craftsmen of gold and silver. Millions of gods are worshiped in the Hindu religion, providing a ready market for statues for homes, grottos, and temples. Sonar people are exquisite jewelers. They are also influential in providing bridal dowries, maintaining a highly respectful status as artisans. The Sonars have been prosperous for centuries even during bad economic times and changing political climates.

What would happen if God's Holy Spirit were to sweep through the Sonar people group with the light of His gospel, and idol makers would leave their trade? Their influence would affect a much wider range than Sonar families. When the Apostle Paul preached Jesus in Ephesus, the silversmiths felt threatened and attacked Paul. Surely the Sonar goldsmiths would also feel threatened if Christ were to invade their realm.

Pray for God's victory over the hearts of Sonar elders. Pray that God will raise up entire Sonar families and communities until their culture is transformed to fully glorify God and represent Him here on earth.—KH

KUNBI MAHRATTA PEOPLE

Kunbi Mahratta people live in about half of Maharashtra state, one of the more urban regions in India, yet the majority still live in rural villages. Typically, they work as farmers. They often own small houses and work animals cultivating their farms. Many are also traders, soldiers, or government service workers. Because they are considered a higher social class, the Kunbi Mahrattas do not face discrimination, but have opportunities for social advancement though they are still primarily a part of the lower-income groups in India.



Shiva

Agricultural festivals are an important part of their lives. Cattle owned by families are often the centerpieces of these festivals, and families take great pride in their ownership.

Kunbi Mahrattas worship the god Shiva and other gods of various incarnations, such as Vishnu and Devi. The temple is commonplace in villages and central to birth, marriage, and death celebrations associated with Hinduism. The temple priest is often from the Brahman caste. They practice arranged marriages, often at an early age. They tend to be poor, and need more efficient farming techniques, and access to modern medical care.

Pray that churches and mission agencies will engage Kunbi Mahratta family leaders who will influence their own with the gospel. May Lord Jesus be honored among them.—KH

JAS 4:10, NET

Humble yourselves before the Lord and He will exalt you.

Pray that the Kunbi Mahratta people will humble themselves before the Lord and inherit the riches and blessings that He offers those who follow Him.

JADHAV MAHRATTA PEOPLE

1 SAM 18:14, NLT

David continued to succeed in everything he did, for the LORD was with him.

Pray that the Jadhav Mahratta people will look to the character of David, and emulate him, especially in spiritual matters.

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Dhanaji Jadhav was an invincible warrior of the Maratha Empire in the 1700s, and the Jadhav Mahratta people are said to have descended from him. Their name means, “invincible.” Today, they are primarily market farmers, and others work in business, government service, and as common laborers. Their council looks after their needs.

Jadhav Mahratta people practice Hinduism, the ancient religion of India. They worship and serve their chosen gods from the Hindu pantheon. The life of a devout Jadhav Mahratta centers around their community Hindu temple. They marry cousins, and divorce is not permitted, while their bereaved are permitted to remarry. Sons inherit family property upon the death of the patriarch, at which time the oldest son assumes family headship. Although Bible resources exist in Marathi, the spoken language of Jadhav Mahratta, they remain unengaged and unreached. Who will tell them?

Pray that Almighty God will give Jadhav Mahrattas a revelation of Lord Jesus’ true identity, and boldness to learn more about Him and take His ways to other communities. Ask Father God to send His harvesters to the Jadhav Mahratta families to befriend and tell them about the invincible warrior who paid the full penalty of the sins of all nations.—KH

PAWAR MAHRATTA PEOPLE

Invincible! That’s the meaning of the name these highly educated, prestigious Pawar Mahratta

people have chosen for themselves. The Mahratta are proud Kshatriya people from Maharashtra, mainly speaking Marathi. Pawar is one of their subgroups.

Most belong to the upper echelons of a rural society as land owners. Their lands are usually big enough to support themselves with much left over to sell to those in urban centers. They are less rigid in cultural practices than other Indian groups. Arranged marriage is not strictly enforced, and a man can marry a woman of his choice as long as she is a Brahman or a Mahratta.

Mahrattas worship many deities, and usually revere their land and earth as their mother. They worship Shiva and fiercely defend their culture, language, and history. They are tolerant of other cultures, but being from an upper caste, they tend to look down upon people of lower social status. There are no known followers of Christ among the Pawar subgroup.

Pray that Pawar Mahratta council leaders will come to Jesus Christ and lead others to Him. Pray that gospel materials, both in print and digital forms, will lead them to salvation. Pray the “invincible” Pawar Mahratta people will turn their families to the only invincible God!—AHS

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PS 33:9, NLT

For when He spoke, the world began! It appeared at His command.

Pray for God’s unlimited power, mercy, and love to woo the Pawar Mahrattas to Him.

HALWAI PEOPLE

DEUT 8:3, NET

So He humbled you by making you hungry and then feeding you with unfamiliar manna. He did this to teach you that humankind cannot live by bread alone, but also by everything that comes from the Lord's mouth.

Pray for the Halwai people to be satisfied by the sweet word of the Lord.



A Halwai at his work station

If you attend a wedding or other special celebration in India, you'll be offered a sweet confection available in many varieties. The name Halwai comes from the

word "Halwa" meaning sweet, so it's no surprise that these people are a Hindu caste of confectioners. Their sweets are also offered to devotees and gods in Hindu temples. Sweet-makers are consequently viewed with respect.

The Halwai own sweet shops throughout northern India. Others are involved in government, private enterprise, engineering, medical professions, and agriculture. Most Halwai are financially comfortable, and some are wealthy, particularly in the cities.

They do not marry outside their respective groups, and they can only have one spouse. They allow for divorce and remarriage. Halwai boys and girls both get an education, and property is equally divided among the sons when the father dies. Unfortunately, modernization has broken down traditional Halwai family units and introduced individualism. As a result, loneliness is an increasing problem.

There are no known followers of Christ among the Halwai. Numerous Christian resources are available on the internet for them, but workers are few!

Pray that the lonely among the Halwai will find Jesus Christ to be the friend and family mender that they need. Pray for Halwai elders to begin a disciple-making movement that will affect other business communities.—AHS

KANDU PEOPLE

You may never have heard of the Kandus, but in 2018 their Hindu saint, Ganninath ji Maharaj, was featured on



an Indian commemorative postage stamp. In addition to their many gods, Hindus also worship prominent historical religious figures called gurus, sadhus, swamis, and saints. Other saints include Saint Paltu Prasad, who composed the Book of Devotion.

Originally, the Kandu people sold sweets but now are predominantly traders, shop keepers, and money lenders in villages. In urban areas, they follow other business-related occupations.

The community marries only within the limits of their caste, clan, or tribe, but in villages, they are allowed to marry outside their local group. The Kandu tend to live in extended families, and they usually speak Hindi along with several other languages, depending on their location in India. Each language subgroup may need its own church planting project.

The Kandu are 100 percent Hindu, without a single known follower of Christ as far as we know. Christian resources include print and audio Bibles, film, audio teachings, and music.

Pray that members of the Kandu caste who have access to the internet will find these resources and also come in contact with Christ followers. Pray that young people will discover Christian music, and that whole families will decide together to follow Christ and disciple others to do the same.—AHS

PROV 22:4, NET

The reward for humility and fearing the Lord is riches and honor and life.

Pray for the Kandu people to find this way to riches and honor and life.

KHATI PEOPLE

ROM 13:12, NIV

The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.

Make this your prayer for the Khati people!

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(This story illustrates truths about this people group.)

The leader of the engineering club looked

around the room, waiting for the murmuring to quiet down. His heart swelled with pride and joy to see so many members who belonged to his Khati group. It was natural, to be expected, he thought, since the Khati are descendants of the Hindu's engineer of the universe, Lord Vishwakarma. He opened the meeting by giving honor to Lord Vishwakarma.

The Khati are known to be a prestigious and hard-working people. They are often considered to be gifted in engineering or in teaching engineering and science. Most Khati aim toward a career in engineering, and many top engineering posts in India are held by them. With more than 1.7 million members, the Khati people live mostly in the states of Rajasthan and Odisha. Although resources about Jesus are available to these educated people, still no known Khati have allowed the Holy Spirit to re-engineer their hearts and minds.

May the Khati seek and find Heavenly wisdom in Bible studies. Ask God to show their hearts the areas of their lives they want to fix but cannot without Him. Ask the Lord to assign believers to work with Khati people, and that they will soon begin a disciple-making movement that will open the gospel to every Khati family.—LR

SADGOPE YADAV PEOPLE

(This story illustrates truths about this people group.)

Light wispy vapors covered the early morning sky above the Sadgope Yadav's farmland. The milky clouds reminded this young farmer of his caste's name, which has to do with milk. He wondered if he would be a better provider for his family if he were a dairy producer instead of struggling to produce crops.

The Sadgope are a sub-caste of the Yadavs. The Sadgope derive their name from the Sanskrit word "sad" meaning good and "gopa" meaning milkman. However, this subgroup is known for its work in cultivation, not in dairy production. Many own land and work in agriculture. Most Sadgope Yadav children do not seek education beyond the secondary level. However nowadays, some youth study for professional careers like computer science.

Having 2,650,000 members, the Sadgope Yadav speak Bengali, and they live in West Bengal. Data shows that 99 percent follow Hinduism. Many Christian resources are available to them, yet less than a percentage of the Sadgope are Christian.

Pray that the Lord will till the soil in Sadgope Yadav hearts, and that there will be a harvest this decade. Ask the Lord to press on the hearts of specific intercessors to adopt the Yadav Sadgope. Pray that the few followers of Christ amongst them will begin a disciple-making movement.—LR

PS 51:17, NET

The sacrifices God desires are a humble spirit— Oh God, a humble and repentant heart you will not reject.

Pray for such a humble spirit to come to influential members of the Sadgope Yadav community.

iStock/soleg



KANAUJIA KUMHAR PEOPLE

ROM 11:33, NET

Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable His judgments, and His paths beyond tracing out!

Pray that entire Kanaujia Kumhar families will discover and teach others these spiritual truths that only come from a relationship with Jesus Christ!

Ajay/PHOP



(This story illustrates truths about this people.)

A Chinese potter picked up an intricately

made clay pot and read the markings on it. He recognized the markings, indicating it came from the Uttar Pradesh state of northern India. “Father, I ask You to reach the Indian who made this pot. May he know that You lovingly created him.”

Not long after in rural India, a potter decided his lumpy clay was not ready for throwing on his wheel. He had struggled unsuccessfully to make the stubborn clay obey his hands. He decided to visit the village market and was surprised to hear a visitor speaking to a growing crowd. “Jesus said, ‘I am the potter, you are the clay’” the visiting pastor taught. The Kanaujia Kumhar man’s heart burned as he considered how he was being stubborn toward God. He asked the visitor more about this spiritual truth once the crowd was gone.

With about half a million members, the Kanaujia Kumhar caste specializes in making exquisite pottery that is sold around the world. Most are Hindu but some are Muslim. All are without Jesus.

Ask God to thrust out workers to Kanaujia Kumhar family elders, and give them the willingness to obey Christ and begin a disciple-making movement.—LR

TAGA PEOPLE

In India, a percussion instrument called *chimta* consists of two long, flat pieces of metal with pointed ends (picture a giant pair of tweezers as long as your arm). Sometimes the blades are covered with jingles. The *chimta* is one of the instruments played by the Taga people.

The Taga are 500,000, and they are concentrated in a very limited geographical area in the north of India. It is said that they were once Brahman but lost that status when they became farmers. Today, they participate in government, own businesses or are professionals. They highly value education.

Valued traditions among Taga women include embroidery and knitting and singing folk-songs at births and marriages. The art of dance is also valued, although only the women dance. Musicians play drums, *chimta*, and bamboo flutes. Like many other cultures, Taga heritage can boast of folktales which have been passed orally through the generations. These tales relate the heroic deeds of Hindu gods, goddesses, and saints. The Taga are Hindu.

Please pray that God will stir a curiosity among the people to read His word and learn of the heroic sacrifice that Jesus made. Pray that this will lead them to begin their own disciple-making movement this decade.—CMW



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PROV 15:33, NET

The fear of the Lord provides wise instruction, and before honor comes humility.

Pray for the Taga people to find the wisdom and humility to follow the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

ARORA PEOPLE

PROV 11:2, NET

When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom.

Pray that the powerful Arora people will be transformed by the humility and wisdom that only comes from a relationship with the Savior.

iStocksharadralav



Four million Arora people live in the northern half of India. They are a “forward caste” which

means that they are socially, educationally, and economically advanced.

This has not, however, always been the case. Many times in the past, the Arora people suffered violent persecution. They were victims of brutal treatment when Arabs and Moghuls invaded Hindu India. More recently, during the 1947 Partition of India, Arora Hindus and Sikhs had to flee Muslim Pakistan. Once in the new land, they often fell prey to the people who had lived longer in the country. Nonetheless, the Arora people displayed great resilience and managed to climb to positions of influence. One noteworthy example is Manmohan Singh, who served as prime minister from 2004-2014. He was the first Sikh to hold that office.

The Aroras are mostly Hindu, but a small number are Sikh and Muslim. While they are tolerant of other religions, few have embraced Christ.

Ask our Heavenly Father to open the spiritual eyes of the Arora, and may they not be blinded by their social and economic success. May they see what Christ has to offer their families and respond by studying His word and disciplining others.—CMW

LOHANA PEOPLE

The Lohana name means “master of swords.” From this name, can you extrapolate what the people are like? Centuries ago, the Lohana people were assigned with protecting the people and serving humanity.

They were so well-known for their bravery that a Chinese traveler in the 400s wrote about it in his diary. Another Chinese traveler a few centuries later similarly documented the Lohana kingdom as a “mighty power.” Because of where they lived, the Lohana were most likely the first line of defense against invaders.

The Lohana people number around 600,000, and 90 percent of them live in Gujarat, India’s westernmost state. Over the centuries, they have moved away from their identity as warriors. The economics of the times led them to become merchants. One famous Lohana was Nanji Kalidas Mehta, who was born to the Lohana caste in Gujarat and became an industrialist and philanthropist in Africa. Now, many Lohanas own food businesses and jewelry businesses.

The Lohana are predominantly Hindu and worship the deities Shiva and Vishnu. There are no known Christian believers among them.

Pray for God to make His presence known to them through His hand-picked ambassadors. As speakers of Gujarati, the Lohana have the entire Bible available to them.—CMW



Gujarat

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EPH 6:17, NLT

Put on salvation as your helmet, and take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Pray that these “masters of the sword” receive the “helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,” so that they can enjoy the abundant life Christ offers all who call on His name.

CHETTI BANIAS

COL 2:23, NET

Even though they have the appearance of wisdom with their self-imposed worship and humility achieved by an unsparing treatment of the body—a wisdom with no true value—they in reality result in fleshly indulgence.

Pray for the Chetti Baniyas and other Hindu communities to understand that it's a transformed heart that allows God to forgive sins, not rituals.



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(The following is a fictional description of the spiritual situation of this people group.)

Razwan laughed as another balloon sailed past him, narrowly missing his head. He turned and saw it hit his best friend Arjun in the shoulder, covering him in a splatter of pink. When he turned back around, another balloon was hurtling toward him. Unable to dodge this one, he felt the stinging impact as it exploded, covering him in orange. This time Arjun laughed.

As the paint soaked into his shirt, Razwan was reminded of the orange bonfire that had blazed the night before. Like his friend Arjun and thousands upon thousands of others, Razwan had prepared for today's Holi festival by praying for the evil inside of him to be destroyed. Despite participating in this ritual, he sensed that the evil was still there.

The Hindu festivals and rituals practiced by the Chetti Baniyas people, some of which are light-hearted and fun, attempt to deal with the most basic problem facing mankind: how to be forgiven for sin and avoid its terrible consequences.

Pray for the Lord to thrust out workers to show them the way to the sin-forgiving Savior. Pray for entire Chetti Bania families to study and embrace the teachings of Jesus, and disciple others in His ways.—CL

AGARWAL BANIAS

(This fictional account is intended to reflect the spiritual condition of the Agarwal Baniyas.)

“This is ridiculous!”

the man told his wife. His wife came in from the kitchen and watched the television. The screen showed a man at a podium, saying something about Jesus and salvation. “I find it annoying,” she told him. “He said, ‘Why do these foreign Christians think we need their Jesus? We don’t even need Hinduism.’” His wife’s eyes bulged, and she said, “What did you say?” “We are Agarwal Baniyas, descended from King Agrasen of the Solar Dynasty.” “That’s legend,” she groaned. “Still, we are royalty of a sort. We are wealthy.” He waved his arm at their surroundings. “We have no needs. Certainly no needs that this Christian Jesus can fulfill.”

There are very few believers among the Agarwal Baniyas. They continue to view Jesus as irrelevant to their lives. Such views are often reinforced by a Westernized presentation of the gospel in the mass media.

Pray for the Lord to soften the proud hearts of the self-sufficient Agarwal Baniyas, making them aware of their sin and the need for their families to follow the only Savior. Ask the Lord to send His Spirit to bring a great awakening among them that will lead to a disciple-making movement.—CL



iStockDeepak Sethi

MATT 11:29, NET

Take my yoke on you and learn from me, because I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

Pray for every Bania community to do just this!