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Global Prayer Digest

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Starting 40 Weeks of Prayer for the Least Reached Provinces

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Dear Praying Friends,

This is the first of 40 weeks of prayer for unreached people groups (UPGs) in 40 unreached provinces throughout the world. A couple of these areas are in China, but the vast majority are in the South Asian countries of Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh. For the next 40 weeks we will pray for unreached people groups in specific provinces and states. We will start with the province of Chittagong in Bangladesh; then we will move to the other side of South Asia to pray for India's Punjabi Sikh peoples; then we will go to China's Gansu Province. From there we will pray for the peoples of Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, home of the Pashtun peoples. We will end this month in India's Bihar province, and that will spill over into next month. Because of this new format, we might not have an editorial or a map page each month. But we will have short introductory information on the provinces at the beginning of each month.

Note that the GPD will only be printed through the end of this year. After that, there will be a shortened version of it within our sister publication, Mission Frontiers, and we will continue digital resources alongside of the Joshua Project. If you want to get printed materials, you can do so by subscribing to Mission Frontiers. Information on how to do this is on page 41.

In Christ,

Keith Carey

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Initiating 40 Weeks of Prayer for UPGs in Unreached Provinces

What Makes Chittagong, Bangladesh Special?

(Week 1 out of 40)

—by Keith Carey

Today we will start a week of prayer for Chittagong. Chittagong is a large port city on the south eastern coast of Bangladesh. It is the second largest city in Chittagong Province, and it includes a port which has seen the best and the worst of times throughout its long history. Chittagong has been inhabited since prehistoric times. In the 1st century Roman geographer Ptolemy noted that Chittagong had one of the largest ports in the region, which was a key gateway for sea trade in South Asia. For centuries, the natural port in Chittagong served economic needs. It was controlled by the Arabs, Persians, the Portuguese, the British, and other world powers before becoming part of Bangladesh.

When India and Pakistan gained their independence from Great Britain in 1947, Pakistan's new leaders were quick to improve the sea port for trade. But it was damaged during Bangladesh's war for independence in 1971. The USSR helped the country recover, but a major cyclone in 1981 ruined much of Chittagong. The Japanese government helped them to recover by building heavy industry along with an international airport. Today Chittagong is central to Bangladesh's rapidly improving economy. It serves both as a port city and as a manufacturing center.

Though it has been largely Muslim and Bengali since the days when the Sufi Muslim missionaries were active between the 13th and 16th centuries, Chittagong also includes smaller groups of Buddhist and Hindu peoples. This part of Bangladesh has been more spiritually responsive to the gospel than others.

- Pray for a disciple-making movement among all 194 unreached people groups represented in Chittagong this decade.
- Pray for God to show Himself powerful by breaking down any spiritual barriers that keep people from Christ's saving grace.



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Punjab: India's Unique Sikh Enclave

(Week 2, days
8-14)

There is a Punjab province in Pakistan and a Punjab in India. Both are very different from one other! Punjab in Pakistan is almost entirely Muslim, while India's Punjab is 58 percent Sikh and 39 percent Hindu. Less than two percent of the people in this land are Muslim with the same name and language base. According to the Joshua Project website, 469 people groups are unreached out of 491 people groups in Indian Punjab. We will be praying for Sikh people groups this week since this is the only part of the world with a Sikh majority.

https://joshuaproject.net/states_districts/IN/IN23

Sikhism originated from a 15th century teacher named Guru Nanak Dev as a reform movement. He rejected the Hindu caste system, taught that all peoples were equal, and that all have equal access to God. They believed that one gets closer to God by living a good life and by practicing charity. Sikhs, like Hindus, believe in reincarnation and the law of karma; you reap what you sowed in your previous life. Like Muslims, the Sikhs worship only one God.

There are enough things in common with faith in Christ that many Sikhs have been drawn to the Savior. In the 1980s when there was much strife between Sikhs and Hindus, it was common for Sikhs to put their trust in Jesus Christ.

- Pray for a spiritual hunger among Sikhs that will result in a mass movement to Jesus Christ.
- Pray for thousands of Sikh families to be blessed by family heads leading them to the savior this decade.
- Pray for a church planting movement among all 469 unreached people groups in Indian Punjab.

Gansu Province: China's Cultural Ecotone

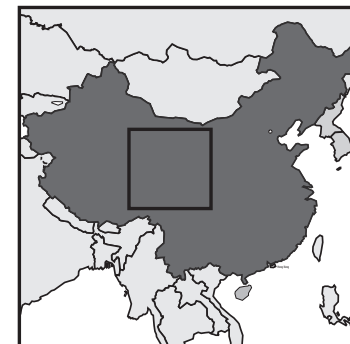
(Week 3, Aug 15-21)

Have you ever driven up into the mountains and noticed that the plant life changes slowly? Near the foothills you might find chaparral plants with oak trees and grass. But as you climb higher you start to find fir and pine trees. The middle area is called an ecotone where you find some chaparral plants and some forest plants.

China's Gansu Province is an excellent example of a cultural ecotone. To the west are Turkic Muslim peoples. To the southwest there is the Tibetan Buddhist world. But it's part of China, so the dominant ethnic groups are Han Chinese. Each of these three major groupings look different and have vastly different cultures.

Though the Muslim Turkic Uighur and Salar peoples are very important in this region, we will pray for them later when we cover Xinjiang Province where they are the majority. Instead, we will pray for some of the Tibetan peoples, while largely ignoring the reached Han Chinese populations except as a missionary force.

- Pray for a disciple-making movement among all 14 unreached people groups in China's Gansu Province.
- Pray for workers who will demonstrate the power of Christ's love among each of these unreached communities.
- Pray for the Lord to thwart all efforts to stop movements to Christ. Pray that His power will show everyone that He will not be stopped.



Everything is in the Name, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

(Week 4, Aug 22-28)



Until 2010, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was simply named the North-west Frontier Province in Pakistan. Since that time the name has been changed to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Why? The dominant people group in that area, the Pashtuns, wanted it to be named after them just like the other provinces of Pakistan were named after a dominant people group.

Almost 70 percent of the Pashtuns live in this province, but 34 million people live in neighboring Afghanistan where they hold much power. Today the border is very porous, and Pashtuns easily travel back and forth from one country to another.

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province is part of Pakistan. Once it was a part of Great Britain's colonial hold in South Asia. The British could not penetrate further, which explains the border between Pakistan and Afghanistan. The British found that they could barely hold onto this region filled with the independent and warlike Pashtun tribes.

Since independence from England, the Pakistani government has had the same experience. The central government in Pakistan has less power than they exert in their other provinces. No one can control the Pashtuns for long. Though the people in this province are Sunni Muslim, they value honor more than anything else. Honor to them means their reputation in the community. Losing honor is a fate worse than death.

- Pray for the Holy Spirit to move in the hearts and minds of local Pashtun leaders in this part of the world. Pray that the Holy Spirit will help them to understand that all honor and glory belongs to the Lord.
- Pray for a disciple-making movement among all 171 unreached people groups in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province.

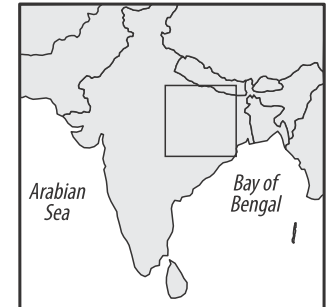
How to Move Bihar Out of the “Graveyard of Mission” Category

(Week 5, Aug 29-Sept 4)

—By Justin Long, missionary researcher

Because of persecution and a lack of response, Bihar has in the past been called the “graveyard of missions.” Many agencies and churches have taken this on as a special challenge. A massive investment of personnel (mostly from Indian missions) has been committed to evangelization, and it is beginning to bear fruit. Several of these organizations have plans for systematically reaching India's Bihar state. While their boldness and commitment is commendable, no one should be left thinking the evangelization of all of Bihar is well under way. There are now reportedly believers in every district; but out of 38 districts, 25 have less than 1,000 believers each. The recent fruit of the gospel work is cause for celebration. Yet they are only the first small seeds in the midst of a massive land yet to be tilled. Most of the new believers come from the “untouchable” communities. It can be difficult for the gospel to cross over from them to other castes. At present, church growth is slower than population growth as a whole, and the work left to be done could well take generations.

- Pray for healthy, well prayed out efforts to begin movements to Christ among all 435 unreached people groups in Bihar.
- Pray for a new spiritual hunger among both low and forward caste communities in Bihar.



BUDDHIST MARNAS IN CHITTAGONG, BANGLADESH

GEN 1:14, NLT

Then God said, "Let lights appear in the sky to separate the day from the night. Let them be signs to mark the seasons, days, and years."

Pray for the Marna people to seek His light and find it.

Kabir Uddin



Did you know that Buddhism is an atheistic religion? Buddhism's "gods," called devas, exist in their celestial realm until they lose all of their good karma. On page 257 of *Buddhism for Dummies*, it says, "So you can't even find security in the god realm."

Nor can Buddhists find security in Muslim Bangladesh, where they are under pressure to become Muslims, particularly since 2001. Their land in the Chittagong Hills Tract is threatened by the government and others. Of Tibetan descent, numbering some 200,000, the Buddhist Marna people speak Rakhine instead of Bangla. Although they practice agriculture and sell lumber, they are moving to cities where they hope to blend in amidst urban anomie. Ninety-two per cent are folk Buddhists, three percent are Christian, and about two percent are Hindu. Given the politics and practices of the majority towards them, they are somewhat open to change. That is where your prayers come in.

Pray that the Buddhist Marna people seek security in Christ alone. Pray that they have access to the JESUS Film, gospel recordings, and loving ambassadors for Christ. Pray that Marna believers will show their families, friends, and neighbors the path to put their trust in Jesus Christ, and have victory over the work of evil spirits.—TP

BURMESE IN CHITTAGONG, BANGLADESH

"Are you bugged by a bug?" a Volkswagen salesman once asked me. The Burmese in Bangladesh are bugged by nats. Yes, you read that right, not gnats, the annoying bugs that swarm around your face. Nats are even worse; they are evil spirits in the Burmese world of Hinayana Buddhism.

The Burmese in Bangladesh mix traditional Buddhism with animism and seek security from the power of nats. These Burmese, whose origin lies in Tibet, number some 300,000 persons and are 98 percent Buddhist and are just over one percent Christian.

As the Burmese entered Bangladesh, they seem to have overwhelmed the Bangladeshis, and that has led to conflict and insecurity for both parties. Language and cultural differences have exacerbated the insecurity, which, in turn, united the Burmese in their Buddhist faith, making them less open to the gospel message.

Pray, therefore, that the local Burmese church will remain strong in unity, purpose, and witness despite its small size. Pray that the Burmese in Bangladesh find the spiritual peace they seek and for missionaries to help them begin a disciple-making movement. Pray for interest and easy access to the JESUS Film and gospel recordings. Pray for Burmese Buddhists to experience the power of Christ over nats.—TP



chayathonwong

EX 15:13, NLT

With your unfailing love you lead the people you have redeemed. In your might, you guide them to your sacred home.

Pray for the Buddhist Burmese to make the Lord their home.

MUSLIM ROHINGYAS IN CHITTAGONG, BANGLADESH

EX 17:12, NLT

Moses' arms soon became so tired he could no longer hold them up. So Aaron and Hur found a stone for him to sit on. Then they stood on each side of Moses, holding up his hands. So his hands held steady until sunset.

Pray for faithful intercessors to regularly pray for the Muslim Rohingyas until the Lord is victorious among them.

Partners



What will be the future for this Rohingya newborn baby?

ended with independence in 1971, but Muslims ought to be accepted in Bangladesh. However, that is not the reality for the 250,000 Muslim Rohingya people in Bangladesh who fled Buddhist Myanmar to escape persecution. They are a distinct people group in both lands, speaking their own language, Rohingya. They are even denied citizenship in Myanmar, their own land. Bangladesh is a very densely populated nation that suffers from periodic flooding. That makes the people unwilling to allow newcomers, no matter what their circumstances are. And the Rohingyas have faced rape, murder, and destruction at the hands of the Burmese government.

Works in the name of Jesus are always better received than words. What if Christ followers went to the Rohingyas in Bangladesh and helped them with their daily needs? Could believers who act as Christ's hands and feet open the door of their hearts to Jesus Christ?

Pray that the Bangla church will meet the needs of Rohingya refugees. Pray for the Rohingya JESUS Film and other materials to soon become widely available to these refugees. Pray for Rohingya safety. Pray that Rohingya citizenship status will be granted in Myanmar and that their legal status be clarified in Bangladesh. —TP

Perhaps it is a result of the civil war that Bangladesh fought with West Pakistan which

HAJAMS IN CHITTAGONG, BANGLADESH

Hajam people enjoy a continually growing business! They are haircutters, and their

customers return on a regular basis. They are an active part of the Muslim community, cutting hair for weddings and funerals, and they even perform minor ritual circumcision. They also function as matchmakers, and some women assist with childbirth. In addition, they are an important part of social gatherings as jesters and provide comedy. They are resourceful and talented.

Though those in Bangladesh are Sunni Muslims, married women will often be distinguished by a nose-stud and the "bindi" dot on the forehead, contributing to ongoing confusion between Muslims and Hindus. Their individuality could make the way more difficult for them to see their need and their Savior who loves them and has provided a better and eternal way of life.

Pray that the Spirit of God will develop a mighty spiritual hunger among Hajam people in Bangladesh for truth that will set them free from the unknown ties that bind them. Pray for broken disciples who will lovingly persevere with Hajam people until church plants occur.—KH



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EX 24:3, NLT

Then Moses went down to the people and repeated all the instructions and regulations the Lord had given him. All the people answered with one voice, "We will do everything the Lord has commanded."

Pray for the Hajam people to give unwavering commitment to the Lord God.

NIKARIS IN CHITTAGONG, BANGLADESH

EX 33:16-17, NLT

"How will anyone know that you look favorably on me—on me and on your people—if you don't go with us? For your presence among us sets your people and me apart from all other people on the earth." The Lord replied to Moses, "I will indeed do what you have asked, for I look favorably on you, and I know you by name."

Pray that you will be encouraged by this example to pray and see the Lord move among the Nikaris. Thank Him for His favor!

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The Nikari name means "doing good." How do people with this mindset see them-

selves as God sees them: wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked (Rev 3:17-18)? Only Almighty God's Holy Spirit can reveal this truth to any people.

Nikari people live in West Bengal and Bangladesh. Their work is selling fish and growing fruit. They marry within their communities, and the bereaved are permitted to marry again. They are governed by a community counsel.

Nikari people are devout Sunni Muslims. They follow the teaching of the Qur'an and the prophet Mohammad, praying five times a day facing Mecca. They give charity during the month of Ramadan, and they fast during the day. Al-Adha, the feast of the sacrifice, lasts four days, during which Muslims slaughter a sheep and distribute meat in three parts: among family, friends, and the poor. They see their good works as payment for their sins, and their admittance into paradise. Who will tell these people for whom Jesus laid down His life, that their unselfish deeds and sacrifices are like filthy rags? (Is 64:6)

Pray for workers filled with the fruit and power of the Holy Spirit to reach Nikari families in Bangladesh. Pray that a movement will develop that will make and develop Nikari disciples who will make more disciples to reach their families and communities.—KH

HINDU SUTRADHARS IN CHITTAGONG, BANGLADESH

(This fictitious story illustrates truths about this people group.)

Upadh, a Brahman priest, lay in a rocky ditch where he had slipped on the muddy road and fallen. Whenever he tried to move, sharp pains ran up his leg. A cold wind began to blow as the sun was setting. Suddenly he heard footsteps above at the crest of the ditch. He called toward the sound, "Please help me!"

Satah, a Sutradhar craftsman walking home from work, called in answer to Upadh, "I will help you!" He quickly slid down to where the priest struggled. "Here, I have water, sir." Upadh shouted an alarming refusal, cursing at Satah. "I will not take water and be polluted from someone beneath me! Leave me alone!"

What would you have done in Satah's sandals? Sutradhar people are a very gifted people group of low caste wood craftsmen. They carve door designs, windows, boats, temple walls, and agricultural tools. Many now work in cities. Others who are novices do not do as well and are barely surviving. In Almighty God's eyes, both men are equally needy.

Pray that God's Holy Spirit will move mightily among Sutradhar families and community leaders, sparking disciple-making movements that will meet their spiritual and physical needs.—KH



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EX 35:23, NLT

All those who owned the following items willingly brought them: blue, purple, and scarlet thread; fine linen and goat hair for cloth; and tanned ram skins and fine goatskin leather.

Pray that today's church in South Asia will be as generous with their talent and wealth as the people of Israel once were. Pray that they will give to efforts to complete the Great Commission.

KAPALIS IN CHITTAGONG, BANGLADESH

DEUT 4:6-7, NLT

Obeys them completely, and you will display your wisdom and intelligence among the surrounding nations. When they hear all these decrees, they will exclaim, "How wise and prudent are the people of this great nation!" For what great nation has a God as near to them as the Lord our God is near to us whenever we call on Him?

Pray that when the Kapali people hear the word of God, they will understand that it is unique wisdom and truth coming from the Lord Almighty.

iStock/moshir anwer



when Kapalis refused to wash the feet of five other Brahmans who had come to visit them. They were therefore declared as untouchables from that day until now.

Today, they are an agricultural caste, living in West Bengal and Bangladesh. They excel in cultivation of jute and products made from jute. Many have become wealthy landowners while others work as servants. The written, audio, and visual Bible exists in their Bengali language, but they will need internet access.

They are devout Hindus, and worship and fear multitudes of gods. These gods control their lives in every way. They need to know about the one true God who loves and cherishes them. They need to know that they are highly valued by the God who created them. There are no known Christ followers among the Kapali people.

Pray for the Holy Spirit of God to move among Kapali families and communities through broken hearted disciples, willing to risk their lives for their benefit. Pray for Kapalis to have fruitful access to the JESUS Film and Bengali Bibles. Pray that disciple-making ministries and church plants will rise among Kapali communities.—KH

SIKH JATS IN PUNJAB, INDIA

(This story illustrates truths about this people group.)

The Jat man stood with his bride outside the wedding enclosure. There was already a burnt offering on an altar to signify the importance of personal purity. Then the couple walked around the wedding enclosure seven times, for seven was a holy number. The bride and groom were members of the Sikh religion. They knew the teachings of the various Sikh gurus but wondered where they would get the moral strength needed to follow those teachings.



After a Sikh wedding

iStock/kadmy

Ancestors of the Jats migrated to India from Central Asia. They have a long and proud military history, but they have also been among South Asia's most skilled farmers. Today a good percentage of Jats follow the teachings of the Sikh gurus. There are almost no followers of Jesus Christ among them.

Ask God to lead a mission agency to reach out to the Jats of India and Pakistan. Pray that Sikh Jats will come to see Jesus Christ as the one who can bless their lives with spiritual purity and holiness. May the Jats come to see Jesus Christ as the true source of salvation, and begin a movement to Christ within their families and communities.—WK

PS 14:2-3, NLT

The Lord looks down from heaven on the entire human race; He looks to see if anyone is truly wise, if anyone seeks God. But no, all have turned away; all have become corrupt. No one does good, not a single one!

Thank the Lord that though He is the only wise God, that we can seek and find Him and bask in His wisdom and mercy. May the Jats do this soon!

SIKH RAJPUTS IN PUNJAB, INDIA

PS 18:1-2, NLT

I love you, Lord; you are my strength. The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my savior; my God is my rock, in whom I find protection.

Pray that many from the Rajput communities love the Lord with all their strength and make Him their only spiritual fortress.

iStockphoto



(This story illustrates truths about this people group.)

A Sikh was asking a Christian believer many questions. "I believe in one God just like Muslims

and Christians. Why is your God any better than mine?" His answer was, "My God knew that we are powerless to live sin-free lives, so He sent His son to pay for our many sins. Is there anyone like that in Sikhism?" The Rajput man thought for a moment. "No. I'll talk to you some more tomorrow." He walked away thinking how frustrated he'd become with his sin. The Sikh gurus taught many good things but didn't provide the power needed to follow their teachings.

Rajputs live in India and Pakistan. They can be Hindus, Muslims or Sikhs. Most Sikh Rajputs are farmers and soldiers, though they have higher status than the Jats we prayed for yesterday. Almost none of them follow Jesus Christ.

Ask God to raise up faithful workers to reach out to Sikh Rajputs with the message of salvation. May the Sikh Rajputs come to see that they need more than teachers; they need the power of God's Holy Spirit. May they know they need a sin-free Savior.—WK

SAINI PEOPLE IN PUNJAB, INDIA

(This story illustrates truths about this people group.)

At the recruiting station in India, the Saini young man signed the enlistment papers needed to join the army of India. He felt proud about continuing the family tradition as his ancestors had been soldiers for many generations. He was ready to fight Pakistan, India's most likely enemy. Sadly, he didn't realize there was another war going on the spiritual level between God and Satan.

The Saini people group arrived in India between 700 and 1100 AD. They came as mercenaries to fight for the various Hindu kings of India. The Saini and the Hindus of India had something in common; the Saini hated the Muslim invaders as much as any Hindu people group of India. After 1100 AD, the Muslims conquered India, and most Saini became farmers. Many Saini resumed being soldiers after the British arrived in India during 1700s AD.

Ask God to open the eyes of the Saini people group to the spiritual battle raging all around them. May leaders of this people group realize they are sinners in need of a savior, and begin to find Him and share His ways with their families.—WK



PS 19:7, NLT

Reverence for the Lord is pure, lasting forever. The laws of the Lord are true; each one is fair.

Pray for the Saini people to have true reverence for the Lord.

MAHTAM SIKHS IN PUNJAB, INDIA

IS 40:3, NLT

Listen! It's the voice of someone shouting, "Clear the way through the wilderness for the LORD! Make a straight highway through the wasteland for our God!"

Pray for the Mahtam Sikhs to make a way for the Lord to transform their families and communities.



Sikh devotees

The pace was relentless, moving from town to village, teaching, proclaiming, and healing. He was preaching and demonstrating the kingdom of God. There was so much still to be done. When Jesus saw the crowds, Matthew tells us, He had compassion on them. They were like sheep without a shepherd. "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few," He told His disciples. "Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into His harvest field." That was 2,000 years ago. Yet the situation remains the same. The Joshua Project entry for the Mahtam Sikhs explains the principle obstacle to ministry among them is: "Lack of workers able to carry the gospel message ..."

More than 630,000 Mahtam Sikhs are waiting. There are no known believers among them. Based on the ratio of one worker for every 50,000 people in the target population, it is estimated that 13 workers are needed to share the good news of Christ and establish a church planting movement among them.

Pray for Him to raise up the necessary workers and send them into this waiting harvest field. Pray for the Lord to prepare the Mahtam Sikhs to receive His blessings and love. Pray that when they hear, they will actively receive it and begin their own disciple-making movement.—CL

RAMDASIA SIKHS IN PUNJAB, INDIA

(This fictional account illustrates the spiritual condition of this people group.)

"...And the visitor said that all we need to do is pray. God will hear." The elderly man was shaking his head. "Nonsense!" He waved the words away with his hand. "It is true, grandfather. And this visitor said someone named Jesus will listen and forgive us — once and for all. After that, the visitor said, we are close to God." "This visitor knows nothing," the old man huffed. "Sikhs realize that reaching God requires much work. Ongoing, diligent work. We must rise early, meditate, cleanse ourselves, chant, and hope that our misdeeds are erased. We do this over and over again. And we can never be sure that we are absolved. Still we must work."

The Ramdasia Sikhs, like their fellow Sikhs all over the world, must rely on rituals to gain God's approval. They believe in reincarnation and karma and can never be sure where they will end up after death.

Pray for the hearts of the Ramdasi Sikhs to be fertile ground for the gospel. Pray for the Lord to call them into freedom in Christ. Ask the Lord to do a mighty work, establishing a church planting movement that will reach members of this community and others.—CL



iStock/dhammadum

IS 40:30-31, NLT

Even youths will become weak and tired, and young men will fall in exhaustion. But those who trust in the LORD will find new strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint.

Pray that Ramdasia Sikh elders will understand this and act upon it. Pray for them to find new strength in Jesus Christ.

SIKH JHINWARS IN PUNJAB, INDIA

2 CHRON 20:22, NLT

At the very moment they began to sing and give praise, the Lord caused the armies of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir to start fighting among themselves.

Pray that the powers of hell that are destroying the Jhinwar people will be pushed back and the loving Lord would move among them.

iStock/Vivek_Renukprasad



So my sheep have been scattered without a shepherd, and they are easy prey for any wild animal.

Ez 34:5, NLT

The fundamental beliefs of Sikhism, articulated in the sacred scripture called Guru Granth Sahib, includes faith and meditation on the name of one creator, divine unity and equality of all humankind, engaging in selfless service, striving for justice for the benefit and prosperity for all, and honest conduct and livelihood. We have much in common! However, in regards to marriage, they believe they should only marry within a specific social group or caste.

In Punjab, many from the Jhinwar community are Sikhs. Divorce and widows marrying again are not looked on favorably. They trade in fish and mutton. Many work in industry. There are no evangelical believers among the Sikh Jhinwar community. While there are recordings and written materials as well as the JESUS Film in their Punjabi language, there has been no movement to Christ among them.

Pray that church groups throughout India will reach out to the Jhinwars with the gospel. Pray that the Holy Spirit would move upon the Sikh Jhinwar community, creating a spiritual hunger leading to a movement to Christ.—JY

SIKH LABANAS IN PUNJAB, INDIA

“Traders and transporters of salt” and “those who wear iron dress.” These phrases provide the



Harvesting salt in India

iStock/Ilyna_Rasko

two possible meanings of the term Labana. In centuries past, the Labanas engaged in maritime and land trade of salt, spices, grains, and shawls. They also served in Sikh armies, wearing “iron dress,” that is, military armor. Whether during war or peacetime, the Labana used cattle and oxen extensively to transport goods. Traveling from Turkey toward India, the nomadic, resourceful Labana set up businesses along the way. They became more settled and turned to agriculture and began to own land. Over time many Labana also turned to Sikhism.

Today, 342,000 Sikh Labana people live primarily in India’s northern state of Punjab, which is the heart of India’s Sikh community. As followers of the Sikh religion, the Sikh Labana people believe in “one immortal being,” and they follow the teachings of their ten gurus. The complete Bible, the JESUS Film, and various audio-visual Bible resources are available in the main Sikh Labana language, Eastern Punjabi. However, they remain among the least reached people groups.

Ask that churches pray for Sikh Labana hearts to soften to Christ. Ask for gospel seeds to be planted in India’s Sikh Labana families, leading to a harvest of Sikh Labana believers and disciples.—CR

PHIL 3:9, NLT

I no longer count on my own righteousness through obeying the law; rather, I become righteous through faith in Christ.

Pray the Sikh Labana people turn to Jesus to receive true righteousness that will bring great blessings upon their families and communities.

TORGUT KALMYK (AKA, OIRAT) IN GANSU PROVINCE

1 JOHN 2:12, NLT

I am writing to you who are God's children because your sins have been forgiven through Jesus.

Pray for the Torgut Kalmyk to desire to have their sins forgiven and for them to receive the gift of eternal life.

iStock/DogoraSun



Water and greenery here!

What is the only people in Europe with a Buddhist majority? You would have to be an expert

to know the answer—the Torgut Kalmyks. The Kalmyks are a subgroup of Mongols who migrated west about four centuries ago. Today most live in the steppe region northwest of the Caspian Sea or China's Gansu Province. Their brand of Buddhism is heavily influenced by animism and shamanism. The Kalmyk seek local shamans for their medical and spiritual needs.

Many Kalmyks continue to live the nomadic life of their Mongol ancestors. Their livelihood is based on raising livestock. They move about the semi-arid plains searching for water and greenery for their herds. Some Kalmyks have settled down to live in one place and work in factories, mines, and on farms. Dancing, singing, and storytelling are a major part of Kalmyk culture. When they gather together, they enjoy horse racing, archery contests, and wrestling.

Pray for the tiny group of Kalmyk believers to be established in the faith and for them to share the good news with their family and friends. Pray the Lord sends medical, agricultural, and veterinary workers to befriend and build relationships with the Kalmyk. Pray that elders and whole families of Kalmyk become part of Christ's body.—DK

TEBBUS IN GANSU PROVINCE

The Tebbu are a Tibetan people who live far from Tibet. Their home is the Min Shan Mountains

in the Chinese province of Gansu. This land of high valleys and mountains is one of the most remote places in China and the world. The Buddhism of the Tebbu people is strongly influenced by shamanism and animism.

Most Tebbu carry on with the nomadic lifestyle of their ancestors. They move from place to place searching for water and greenery for their herds of yaks, horses, cattle, and goats. These animals are their primary source of food, wealth, and clothing. Most Tebbu adults and children are illiterate. The Chinese government wants the Tebbu to live in one fixed area so their children can attend public schools.

A New Testament in the Amdo Tibetan language of the Tebbu became available in 2017. There are presently no known Tebbu churches.

Pray for the Lord to send medical and educational workers to the Tebbu. Pray for the Tebbu to hunger for the truth of the Word of God and to be dissatisfied with any spiritual answers that do not put Jesus on the throne. Pray for Chinese believers to help them establish a disciple-making movement.—DK



Greenery in Gansu Province

iStock/Alberto Sánchez

ROM 3:19, NLT

Obviously, the law applies to those to whom it was given, for its purpose is to keep people from having excuses, and to show that the entire world is guilty before God.

Pray for the Tebbu people to realize that they are accountable for their sins before a righteous God.

BOYU TIBETANS IN GANSU PROVINCE

PS 43:4, NLT

There I will go to the altar of God, to God—the source of all my joy. I will praise you with my harp, O God, my God!

Pray for the Lord to be the source of exceeding joy for the Boyu. Pray that they learn songs that praise the one, true God.

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Gansu mountain scenery

Would you like to live at an elevation of 10,000 feet (3040 meters)?

One of the main villages of the Boyu Tibetan people is located at that altitude. They live in mountain villages in the southwestern region of the Chinese province we are praying for this week, Gansu. The Boyu are a small group of less than 5,000 individuals, but they have their own distinct culture and customs.

Their religion is a mixture of Chinese folk religion, Buddhism, and veneration for their ancestors. The patron deity of the Boyu is the flower goddess, Lianzhi. During the yearly Flower-Gathering Festival, the Boyu worship this goddess, who according to their traditions, taught them how to grow crops and weave cloth. In addition to growing crops, the Boyu raise yaks, cattle, and goats for their meat, milk, and hides.

A whole Bible is available in the Boyu's language of Central Tibetan. Unfortunately, many of the Boyu are unable to read.

Pray for gospel recordings and musical resources to become easily available to them. Pray for Chinese believers to build friendships and spread Christ's fame to Boyu families. Pray that village elders and entire families come to know the Savior and that growing churches are soon established among them.—DK

ZHUGQU (JOOG-CHOO) TIBETAN IN GANSU PROVINCE

(This story describes the life and beliefs of the people.)

The Zhugqu man stopped his horse halfway up the mountain and surveyed the surroundings. His wife had prepared their family sacrifice to the mountain god, and he was ready to deliver it. Only men were allowed to participate in the Arrow-Planting Ceremony. She had packed the sacrifice, and when he reached the top of the mountain, he would plant a prayer flag.

A Zhugqu legend states that there once was a “certain man of dignity and fame who was found by the gods to be too bad for heaven but too good for hell. Accordingly, he stayed on the earth, creating a great deal of mischief. Eventually a living Buddha took pity on him and settled him on a mountain, directing him to give up evil and devote himself to good.”

The Zhugqu people are counted as part of the Tibetan nationality, but they speak their own language and maintain their own customs. As polytheists, they believe that mountains are holy and that demons live in the mountains. Their prayers express their desire for peace, security, thriving livestock, and plentiful harvests.

Pray that even as God in the Old Testament spoke to Moses on the mountain, He will also speak to the Zhugqu on their mountains.—CMW



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1 COR 4:20, NLT

For the Kingdom of God is not just a lot of talk; it is living by God's power.

Pray that when the Yugur peoples have a church that they will be led by those who live by God's power, and forsake the “power” of the flesh.

ENGER YUGURS IN GANSU PROVINCE

2 CHRON 6:18, NLT

But will God really live on earth among people? Why, even the highest heavens cannot contain you. How much less this Temple I have built!

Pray that the Enger Yugur people will understand the greatness of God like King Solomon did in all his wisdom.

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Gansu Province, China

The Yugur people (not to be confused with the Uighurs) live in the Gansu corridor in northwest China. They are a small

people group and are divided into the Enger (eastern) Yugur and Saragh Yugur (see tomorrow's page). Their language is Mongolian, although many also speak Mandarin Chinese. In fact, some Enger Yugur can now only speak Mandarin Chinese!

According to historical record, in the mid 800s, "heavy snowfall, combined with an attack from the forest-dwelling Kyrgyz from the north, forced the Mongolian Yugurs to flee from their homeland. They moved to Gansu, where they came under the control of the Tibetans." Like the Tibetans, the Enger Yugur practice wind burials. Corpses are cut into pieces and taken to a mountaintop where ravens and other carrion birds devour the flesh.

Sadly, only a few Enger Yugur know Jesus today, although Christianity was widespread among the people a couple of centuries ago, as evidenced by archeological discovery of many crosses. In the 1990s, some Enger Yugur embraced Christ, and today there are around 50 believers.

Ask God to move mightily among these believers to begin a lasting movement to Christ. Pray for the few Enger Yugur believers to be so filled with the fruit of the Holy Spirit that they draw many to Christ.—CMW

SARAGH YUGURS IN GANSU PROVINCE

(This story illustrates truths about the lives of the people.)

"No! You can't come in!" the

Saragh Yugur man yelled at the friend who was trying to enter his yurt. The man outside called out, his speech slurred from alcohol, "Pleazh! You're my friend!" "No! You're wearing red, like the god who rides a reddish horse, and no one wearing red can go into a yurt! Besides, I know you'll bother me for more to drink, and you'll be here all night!"

Along with the Enger Yugur (see yesterday), the Saragh Yugur form the official Yugur minority in China. The Saragh Yugur speak a Turkic language whereas the Enger Yugur speak a Mongolian language. Therefore, when the two groups meet (which is not often, as they live in separate regions), they have to communicate in Chinese.

The Saragh Yugur practice Tibetan Buddhism and shamanism. In 1997, about 15 people believed in Christ, following a screening of the JESUS Film. This number grew to around 50 believers by 2000. The authorities strongly oppose the introduction of Christianity and have arrested mission workers who have attempted to distribute gospel literature.

Pray that God will soften the hearts of the authorities while increasing the spiritual hunger in the hearts of the Saragh Yugur.—CMW



Prayer flags and a yurt

Svetlana123

NEH 4:14, NLT

Then as I looked over the situation, I called together the nobles and the rest of the people and said to them, "Don't be afraid of the enemy! Remember the Lord, who is great and glorious, and fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your homes!"

Pray that intercessors around the world who are praying with you today will pray with confidence, knowing that the Lord is on our side.

RONGMAHBROGPA AMDOS IN GANSU PROVINCE

PS 10:17-18, NLT

Lord, you know the hopes of the helpless. Surely you will hear their cries and comfort them. You will bring justice to the orphans and the oppressed so mere people can no longer terrify them.

Pray for the Lord to be the only source of spiritual comfort for the oppressed among this Amdo people group.

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Tibetan prayer flags

Buried in the heart of Asia, the Rongmabrogpa are isolated from the rest of the world by mountainous geographic and

political boundaries. It's a land of spiritual darkness, controlled by China. Like other Tibetan peoples, the Rongmabrogpa follow a mixture of Buddhism and shamanism. Their prayer flags flutter uselessly in the wind. Many are nomads living in tents and constantly moving their yaks, goats, and cattle to greener pastures. Asian Harvest reports that alcoholism and opium use are common. The men make the decisions but delegate the hard work to the women. Ironically, they seek to gain good karma by moral living and following their form of Buddhist teaching. They believe this will help them in the next incarnation of their cycle of life also gained by spinning prayer wheels and prostrating before idols.

Trapped in this religious cycle, the Rongmabrogpa are in desperate need of the gospel. They are one of the least evangelized peoples of the world.

Pray that the darkness will be overcome by the truth of the gospel and that their chains of bondage be loosened by God's word. Ask God to raise up a strong Rongmabrogpa Amdo church that can carry the gospel to these needy people.—AHS

PASHTUNS IN KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA, PAKISTAN

Today we are praying for a people group that had a province of Pakistan named after them in recent years.

Do you know who these people are?



Pashtun children

The people are the Pashtuns, and they have an estimated 350 tribes. The Pakistani province is now called Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the latter word referring to the Pashtuns. This week we are praying for the peoples of this province. Formerly this province was called the Northwest Province, but due to the Pashtun desire for greater honor, it now includes reference to the dominant Pashtun people.

Honor to them is defined by their public reputation. Honor means that men must be tough warriors, and women must be loyal and submissive to the men in their families. Though they are Sunni Muslims, honor is even more important. According to their own proverb, "A true Pashtun says, May I lose my faith, but may I never lose my honor!" A Pashtun will throw himself in the fire (even the fire of hell!) for the sake of his honor!

Pray that Pashtuns will have faith to believe that the most honorable thing they can do is submit to the King of kings. Pray for radio and TV broadcasts to be embraced by Pashtuns and lead them into a disciple-making movement this decade.—KC

1 SAM 12:20, NLT

"Don't be afraid," Samuel reassured them. "You have certainly done wrong, but make sure now that you worship the Lord with all your heart, and don't turn your back on Him."

Pray for many from the Pashtun peoples to give total devotion to the Lord.

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TANAOLIS IN KHYBER-PAKHTUNKHWA, PAKISTAN

PS 67:3-4, NLT

May the nations praise you, O God. Yes, may all the nations praise you. Let the whole world sing for joy, because you govern the nations with justice and guide the people of the whole world.

Pray for the Tanaoli people to soon praise the Lord. Let the Tanaoli praise God. Let all the Tanaoli praise you!

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Scenery in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa

The Tanaoli are distinct ethnic group living in one of the most beautiful areas of the world, the pre-Himalayan mountains of northern Pakistan in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, the province we are praying for this week. Because of their mountainous homeland, their suspicion of outsiders, and their deeply ingrained Islamic traditions, it is humanly impossible for them to find Christ. Family and extended family mean everything to them. Their communal life is ruled by strict rules of honor and arbitration by their authorities.

Their land is beset by clan or tribal feuds. They need to know the peace that they can have in their hearts when they meet our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. They will need ambassadors of Christ whom they feel they can trust. Perhaps a medical team could be effective in ministering to them. We know also that unless the Holy Spirit draws them to Himself, they will not be receptive to the truth of Christ.

Pray that the Lord will send sensitive teams to the Tanaoli people. Pray that they will sing for joy to God and allow their communities to be transformed by the goodness of Jesus Christ.—JS

MOCHIS IN KHYBER-PAKHTUNKHWA

The Mochi people of Pakistan are highly skilled leather workers. Even though



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they are Muslim, many of their beliefs are like their Hindu neighbors, who give low status to those who deal with dead animals—and of course leather comes from the tanned hide of a dead animal. They have low status despite Islam's insisting on the equality of all men.

Unfortunately, educational standards are low for the Mochis, who have a literacy rate of no more than 15 percent. They marry early, usually at age 17 for males, but even earlier for females. We can expect pregnancies for these very young females to present problems for them and their infants.

How do we reach these precious people with the good news that Jesus loves them and wants to bless their communities? The printed Bible is not the best way to reach people with such a low literacy rate. Oral tools are better for communicating the gospel message to them.

Pray for the Lord to thrust out women with pre-natal care abilities to the Mochi people. May they take the JESUS Film and gospel recordings to these oral people. Ask God to send dreams and visions to their leaders so spiritual doors will be open at last.—JS

NEH 8:12, NLT

And all the people went away to eat and drink, to share what they had, and to show their joy. They understood the words which had been made known to them.

Pray for the Mochi people to rejoice when they hear God's word. Pray for them to have a Holy Spirit-driven desire to obey the word.

MUSSALIS IN KHYBER-PAKHTUNKHWA, PAKISTAN

NEH 9:10, NLT

Then You made special things to see and did powerful works against Pharaoh, against all his servants and all the people of his land. For You knew that they were proud and made it hard for our fathers. And You made a name for yourself, as it is this day.

Pray that the Mussali people will cherish God's good name and share it with many others.

iStock/zms



Sanitation workers have low status everywhere, but especially in South Asia where there is a strong caste system.

The Mussalis are Muslims who live in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, though many also live in Pakistan's Punjab Province or India's state of Rajasthan, which borders Pakistan.

Even though the Mussalis are Muslim, they are subjected to the caste system, and their status is extremely low because they are sanitation workers. They spend their days cleaning latrines and toilets. They are not happy with their status in life, but they have almost no opportunities to move up the social ladder.

They, like the Mochi Muslims we read about yesterday, need education to rise out of poverty, but their literacy rate is very low. Only prayer by God's people on their behalf will be effective in connecting them with the One who can give them status as born-again believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Pray for believers to help the Mussalis with their economic needs. Pray for the Mussali people to find their sense of worth in the Lord Jesus Christ. Pray for workers to not only plant the seeds of new birth in their lives, but also to stay and reap a great harvest.—JS

BAGHBANS IN KHYBER-PAKHTUNKHWA, PAKISTAN

When those from the Indian subcontinent hear the word “Baghban,” most think of the hit Bollywood film with that title. But when a farmer from the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan hears that word, he thinks of himself, his family, and his community.

The Baghban people are a community of gardeners, and “Baghban” is the literal definition of their trade: gardener. Because most can't own land, they are sharecroppers on small plots where they grow and sell vegetables and fruit. This landless community also lives in India. They have spread around so much that they speak as many as eight languages.

Although the world may think of the beloved drama when they hear “Baghban,” the Pakistani people think of the Baghban gardeners, who deserve to be recognized and helped. A Baghban educational trust assists them with educational needs and a Baghban Muslim Welfare Association advocates for them.

All Baghban are Muslims, as Islam has been deeply ingrained in their culture and identity. Evangelistic materials have long existed for them, but they still don't accept that Jesus must “garden” their soul. The seed of Christ has never been meaningfully planted in their soil.

Pray that God will send “gardeners” of the faith to help them begin a movement to Christ.—LR



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PS 25:12-13, NLT

Who are those who fear the Lord? He will show them the path they should choose. They will live in prosperity, and their children will inherit the land.

Pray that spiritual and physical prosperity will be signs to the Baghban people that the Lord can and will bless those who fear and obey Him.

KHOJAS IN KHYBER-PAKHTUNKHWA, PAKISTAN

GEN 41:15-16, NLT

Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I had a dream last night, and no one here can tell me what it means. But I have heard that when you hear about a dream you can interpret it." "It is beyond my power to do this," Joseph replied. "But God can tell you what it means and set you at ease."

Pray that God will use even supernatural events to direct non-believing Khoja leaders to know that the Lord is the only God worthy of devotion and worship.

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Blending two distinct worlds, the Khoja people of Pakistan have one leg in Islam and the other in Hinduism. They practice a folk religion that is a combination of the two. Khoja can be either Sunni or Shi'ite or even a minority sect of

Islam such as Ismaili. Though they have been an Islamic people group for a very long time, they continue to maintain Hindu practices and traditions alongside the practices of Islam. Despite these divisions and the additional divisions of language, they are very connected between their subgroups; they marry amongst these subgroups, preferably to first cousins.

Among the Khoja, there are no known followers of Jesus. The plurality of their languages makes cultural penetration difficult – each language subgroup may need its own church planting efforts. Gospel recordings, the JESUS Film, and written scripture resources are available online for the Khoja, but most likely few know about them.

Pray that workers would be sent into the fields. Pray for Khoja family elders to desire to know truth, and to find it in Jesus Christ. Pray for unique and personal discipleship movements for each language subgroup and for a widespread longing for relationship with a loving God.—BK

TAJIKS IN KHYBER-PAKHTUNKHWA, PAKISTAN

Mystery surrounds the Tajik people in Pakistan's northern Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Province.

Once a powerful kingdom that spanned from what is now northern Pakistan, much of northeastern Afghanistan and beyond, the Tajiks were later controlled by the USSR in their original homeland, Tajikistan. Most of those who live in northern Pakistan have lost knowledge of their rich history and culture.

In 2005, up to 7.5 percent of the total population of Afghans living in Pakistan were considered to be ethnic Tajiks. They had come following the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. We don't know how many have returned to Afghanistan or Tajikistan, nor do we know how many in Pakistan are receptive to the gospel, but there is some receptivity among them in Tajikistan.

Pray that the Tajiks in Pakistan will find and cherish their true identity as beloved children of God. Pray for the gospel to bring light and life to Tajiks everywhere. Pray for evangelistic and discipleship movements in northern Pakistan that will bless the Tajik community. Pray for an outbreak of signs and wonders that will point the way to the resurrected Savior, and lead to Christ-ward movement that will span the entire region.—BK



iStock/danishkhan

PS 19:7, NLT

Reverence for the Lord is pure, lasting forever. The laws of the Lord are true; each one is fair.

Pray for the Tajik people in Pakistan to have true reverence for the Lord.

KOIRI (AKA, KOERI) PEOPLE IN BIHAR, INDIA

PS 24:7, NLT

Open up, ancient gates!
Open up, ancient doors,
and let the King of
glory enter.

Pray for many among the
Koiri people to open their
hearts and minds to the
true King of glory and let
Him in!

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*(This story
illustrates
truths about
this people
group.)*

Tears of joy
streamed
down his

face as Dhira, a prosperous Koiri farmer in Bihar, watched his daughter receive her degree in education at Bihar's university graduation ceremony. Each of his four children now had higher education and qualified for good jobs in teaching, engineering, and hotel management. He and his wife had struggled and worked hard on the land that has been in his family for generations. No longer did he feel he had to accept being looked down on as a member of the low Koiri caste. He was grateful and planned to give a donation to the Hindu temple in his town to show his gratitude to the gods.

There are about 5.5 million Koiris distributed throughout the state of Bihar. Their name implies that they are people who cultivate the earth. Determined to progress, many Koiri today have prominent professional and governmental positions. All they have ever known are the Hindu gods. They have few opportunities to hear about Jesus Christ.

Pray that their hearts and minds will change so they will be open to responding to the blessings of Christ. Pray for a movement to Christ that will bless Koiri communities beyond what they can imagine.—PD

DUSADHS IN BIHAR, INDIA

*(This story
illustrates
truths
about this
people group.)*

With a loud voice, Sukal, a Dusadh young man, was singing in Hindi on the busy streets of Patna, Bihar. He was begging while shaking a small bamboo pot that held the idols Sitla and Lakshmi, the goddess of prosperity. A man approached him and said, "If you want to earn some money, I can give you work. I need someone to check my cows for insects. I know you Dusadhs are very good at this." Sukal agreed and went to work.

There are an estimated five million Dusadh people living in the state of Bihar, India. These former Hindu untouchables are now registered as a scheduled (low) caste. This has opened more opportunities for them to receive education and low government jobs. Unfortunately, most Dusadh remain very poor and unskilled. Only a few own land. The majority work in low paying jobs in the areas of farming. Many sell cow-dung, inspect cows for insects, or beg in the streets of Bihar's cities.

Pray that Indian believers will reach out to the Dusadh. Pray for thousands of Dusadh people to gather in fellowship and discipleship so that they can receive the blessings of Jesus Christ and become part of His holy family.—PD

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PS 23:2, NLT

He lets me rest in
green meadows;
He leads me beside
peaceful streams.

*Pray for the Dusadh
people to rest in the
Lord and thank Him for
His peace and joy.*