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Pray For the Gift of Righteousness To Come to Gujarat's People of Power

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Editorial



Dear Praying Friends,

The state of Gujarat has been called India's economic driving force. Although rich in natural resources, there is a more important reason why Gujarat holds economic power in India: the people themselves. They are some of the most talented citizens in all of India, and these people are the real "driving force" behind Gujarat. I am using the generic term, "influential peoples," because we are praying this month for those who hold power and often wealth in India's most western state.

But with power and wealth comes temptation. Anyone who thinks they can gain wealth and power without being tempted to misuse it at the expense of others is kidding themselves. That is why our Bible verses this month are almost all about righteousness. We will pray for a spiritual transformation and righteousness for these people groups of influence that can only come from the work of the Holy Spirit. Such a change could improve the lives of all the people of India.

In Christ,

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

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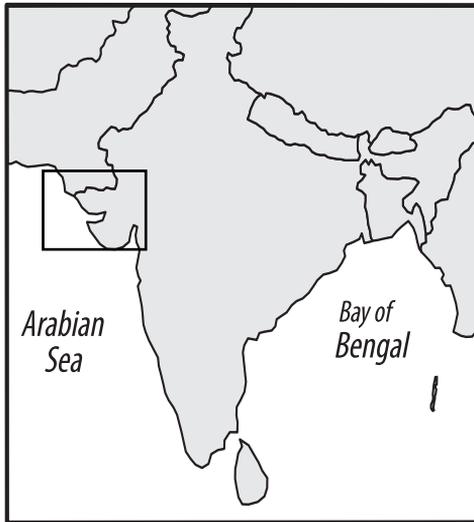
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Pray For

A Disciple Making Movement Among Every Influential People Group in Gujarat



RESILIENCE AND HARD WORK PAY OFF FOR GUJARAT'S INFLUENTIAL COMMUNITIES

Gujarat, a small state in western India, has everything needed to produce enormous wealth. They have the natural resources, a hard-working population, and people who are willing to take chances to get ahead. Though the economy in Gujarat is far from perfect, the people

have accomplished some remarkable feats in the last couple of decades. When one thinks of economic growth in India, the first place they look is Gujarat. In 2015, an Indian government official went so far as to say that Gujarat can become a driver for the global economy (<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/ahmedabad/Gujarats-growth-key-to-Indias-economic-health/articleshow/50339739.cms>).

MAP-INDUSTRY NATIONAL WEALTH ORIGINAL PACK



iStockPhotos

—Keith Carey,
editor-in-chief,
GPD

A Long History of Rising to the Top

In the late 1800s, many of the peoples of Gujarat went to British colonies in East Africa to live in conditions that were not much better than that of slaves. Today, the great-grandchildren of these indentured servants are among the wealthiest people in Africa. Many of them now run lucrative businesses. Despite all obstacles, Gujaratis managed to rise to the top, wherever they live.



INFLUENTIAL COMMUNITIES

After India gained her independence from the UK in 1947, they adopted a socialist-leaning economic model that stunted their growth for decades. While many other Asian countries were growing exponentially, India's growth was very slow, thanks to the centralized planning based on the Soviet model.

Then in 1991 while the USSR was dissolving, the Indian prime minister P.V. Narasimha Rao and his financial minister Manmohan Singh decided to make major changes. The Indian press called this “economic liberalization,” and it amounted to changing to a free-market model economy based on private enterprise. The people were now free to run businesses without the undue government shackles that were holding them back. The results were staggering for the Indian economy, especially in Gujarat. Eventually Manmohan Singh went on to become India's prime minister, and the process continued.

One of the key players during this time was Narendra Modi who was the chief minister of the state of Gujarat during the early 2000s. Modi is with the BJP, a Hindu nationalist political party which favors capitalistic economic policies along with “Hindutva,” which amounts to Hindu nationalism. The members of the BJP believe that other religious communities should not have the same rights as the Hindu majority. More on this later.

What Makes Gujarat Unique

Gujarat has a strong agricultural and industrial/manufacturing economy. Gujarat is one of India's most urbanized states, according to a March 2013 article in *Money Control* (<http://www.moneycontrol.com/news/business/stocks/-1152659.html>). Though people move there from other parts of India for jobs, this state has a low unemployment rate. This state has been hit by earthquakes, floods, droughts, and other natural disasters, but they have always managed to overcome such challenges. Parts of Gujarat were a battleground



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continued on next page



INFLUENTIAL COMMUNITIES

during two Indo-Pakistani wars, which might explain part of the hostility towards Muslims in this state. In 2002, there was an anti-Muslim riot that left over 1,000 dead and 2500 injured (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2002_Gujarat_riots)

Gujarat has a number of prominent mainstream communities that know how to make businesses turn a profit. The Banias (days 18-20) might be among the least popular people groups in India because they are money-lenders. But they are almost never in need. Members of Bania communities learn at an early age how to make a profit. The Patels, also called the Patidars, (day 17) are among the best-known peoples in India because they run businesses all over the world. If you have ever stayed in a motel in the US, Canada, or the UK, you have probably met a Patel who runs the motel. Patels are also engaged in selling dry goods and other grocery items, so you might find them running family grocery stores in your city. If someone would share Gujarati-language scriptures with them, it would probably be the first time they have seen a Bible verse in their own language. Though the Sonars (day 23) are running into some hard times, they are very prominent in the gold and jewelry trade. These goods will always be in demand in India, a country where many families use jewelry as part of a bride's dowry. The Aroras (day 21) are among India's leading business communities as are the Marwaris (day 16). The Brahmin communities (days 4-15) have a knack for higher mathematics; they are in demand in India's computer industry and as university professors. This month we will be praying for these highly capable Hindu communities to reach their potential by allowing Jesus Christ into their lives.

Gujarat's Challenges

Like people everywhere who have wealth and power, these prominent communities face a number of serious temptations. Who gets the new wealth generated by the people in this amazing state? As it stands, the very rich are getting richer, but the common people are, if anything, worse off according to a November 2017 article in *The Wire* (<https://thewire.in/200066/gujarat-models-failure-explains-economy-significant-factor-coming-elections/>).





INFLUENTIAL COMMUNITIES

Even those with higher education who work in the computer industry can easily be used up and discarded by those who work them for unreasonably long hours. There is also the temptation to limit opportunities to Hindus only, since Gujarat is about 88 percent



iStock/Photos

Hindu. Capable Muslim communities like the Bohras and the Memons are out of favor in a state run by the BJP, a political party that believes that India should be a nation based on Hindu culture. History clearly proves that allowing people opportunities based on their abilities rather than their economic, ethnic or religious backgrounds allows the most capable to rise to the top. There is also the temptation for the state government to favor large corporations over smaller ones. In the name of obtaining needed revenue, a state can tax certain industries like the diamond industry to the point where they can no longer make a profit.

Undoubtedly, there are members of these influential communities that want to do what's right. How will they know what is right if they don't have contact with the God who created them, the same God who gives the ability to produce wealth? The situation definitely needs prayer!

Let's Pray!

- Pray for the Lord to move among each of these influential communities and give them hearts and minds that crave the righteousness that only Jesus Christ can offer.
- Pray for many to obtain Bibles and find that God's word offers the way to fill their spiritual void.
- Pray for social justice for ordinary workers and vulnerable religious communities.



MISSIONARY BIOGRAPHY, WILLIAM CAREY

IS 48:18, NLV

Oh, that you had listened to my commands! Then you would have had peace flowing like a gentle river and righteousness rolling over you like waves in the sea.

Pray that the peoples of India will understand that God teaches us the ways of righteousness and peace that can provide them with a better tomorrow.



An English church building

Like most Englishmen, William Carey grew up as a nominal member of a local church. "I

wanted something," he said, "but I had no idea that nothing but an entire change of heart could do me good." When he was 18, he decided to actively seek a dynamic relationship with Christ. To this end, young Carey left his church, and with a few believers, he formed a "congregational" church.

He taught himself classical Greek; he also taught himself to read French and Dutch in a matter of a few weeks. His linguistic gifts were later greatly used as he submitted them to God. A book about Captain Cook's Pacific explorations especially intrigued him. For the first time, Carey became aware of the un-evangelized world.

It was an innocent meeting of Particular Baptist pastors in 1792. Yet out of that gathering came events that rocked the foundations of church history. The custom was for each of these pastors to suggest a topic for discussion at the following meeting. William Carey's topic suggestion was a bombshell: "whether the command given to the Apostles, to 'teach all nations' (Matthew 28:18-20) was not obligatory on all succeeding ministers to the end of the world..." These ideas were not well received, as you will see tomorrow.

Pray for spiritual discernment for today's mission leaders.—AL



DAY

02

CAREY BIOGRAPHY, CONTINUED

The senior pastor retorted, "Young man, if God intends to save the heathen, He will do so without your help or mine!" Carey was not thwarted by this public rebuke. At



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Indigo

the urging of a friend he wrote down his concerns in a booklet called, "An Enquiry into the Obligation of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathen." He answered the typical arguments of his day against mission outreach and summarized the historical progress of missionary work since Pentecost. It included a careful survey of the world as it was then known. This landmark study was sensible and persuasive, a cornerstone document for a new wave of Protestant mission outreach.

In 1792, along with 13 local pastors, Carey formed the "Particular Baptist Society for Propagating the Gospel Among the Heathen." He volunteered to go to India as one of the board's first missionaries.

The Carey family set sail in 1793 with no money. During the first year of ministry in Bengal, almost no financial support came from the mission board. So Carey took a job as foreman at an indigo factory (see photo). He found it ideal for learning Bengali and witnessing. After hours he worked on translating the Bible.

In 1800 the Carey family moved to Serampore, near Kolkata. There Joshua Marshman and William Ward joined him, and the three men with their families formed the Serampore Mission.

Pray for today's leaders to get in line with God's agenda.—AL

TITUS 2:12, NLV

And we are instructed to turn from godless living and sinful pleasures. We should live in this evil world with wisdom, righteousness, and devotion to God...

Pray that church leaders will have enough God-given wisdom to understand the times.



CAREY BIOGRAPHY, CONTINUED

IS 45:8, NLV

Open up, O heavens, and pour out your righteousness. Let the earth open wide so salvation and righteousness can sprout up together. I, the Lord, created them.

Pray for today's workers in India to take both salvation and Christ's righteousness to all communities.



“Expect great things from God, attempt great things for God” became William Carey's motto. This demanded much, but anything less would be too small. In 1801, only eight years after arriving in India, Carey published the first completed Bengali New Testament. He also became a teacher of eastern languages in a school in Kolkata, which thus provided financial support.

After 25 years of hard labor against many odds, Carey grieved that he could

point to only 600 believers and a few thousand seekers—a good harvest among Bengalis by our standards today. Yet it is difficult to truly measure the impact of his life upon India. Besides his extensive translation and literary accomplishments, he founded one of India's earliest and most prestigious universities. Furthermore, his efforts resulted in making the Hindu practice of widow burning illegal.

The humble William Carey, early apprenticed to a shoemaker, was totally given into the Lord's hands. But because of his little book (*An Enquiry. . .*) and the testimony of his life, Protestants in Europe and America caught the vision of the unreached. Within a few years these Protestants had organized themselves into a number of mission agencies and began reaching out to every continent of the world. From *William Carey*, by Mary Drewery, Zondervan, 1979.

Pray for God to raise up 21st century William Careys to take the gospel to the remaining unreached people groups of India.—AL

MODH PEOPLE

DAY

04

(This story is intended to illustrate attitudes of this people group.)

“Jani, it is amazing how much money you and other Modh Brahmins have raised to help your people. How did you do it?” Sarah, an American businesswoman, was amazed. Jani responded, “We have help from above. Our mother goddess Modeshwari Mata has allowed us to succeed. She is a strong warrior goddess who fights the evil forces that threaten our peace and prosperity. Because of her help we can be generous to those in our community who need help, paying their medical bills and tuition.”



Kurhan/StockPhotos

PS 71:19, NLV

Your righteousness, O God, reaches to the highest heavens. You have done such wonderful things. Who can compare with you, O God?

May the Modh community seek and find God's righteousness that reaches to the heavens!

“Jani, I’m a Christian and I accept that Jesus gave the answers to overcoming evil through His teaching in the Bible. He is a personal God and reaches out to each person who asks Him to forgive them of their sins. Because of the Lord Jesus, my life is much better, and I have found spiritual peace. A favorite verse of mine in the Bible says, ‘For God did not send His son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him.’ Jani asked, “Is God and Jesus the same for everyone?” The two women sat down to discuss spiritual matters for the next two hours.

Pray that God will send His servants to members of the Modh community, and may they be open to knowing God personally. Pray for a disciple making movement to flourish among them.—PD

NAGAR PEOPLE

1 JN 1:9, NLV

If we tell Him our sins, He is faithful and we can depend on Him to forgive us of our sins. He will make our lives clean from all sin.

Pray that many from the Nagar people will confess their sins to God and enjoy clean lives free from wrongdoing.

Halfpoint/iStockPhotos



(This story is intended to illustrate attitudes of this people group.)

“Hello! I’m Nerji.” The Nagar man shook hands with the man that he would be

sitting next to on the plane that was leaving from Gujarat for Chicago. “Hi Nerji, just call me Tom. I’m from Chicago. Have you ever been there?” “No. This is my first time going to the U.S. I’m going to be speaking to a group of young people who do not know much about our heritage.” “Fascinating! Tell me about yourself and your people.” “We are Nagars, and we are devoted to Lord Shiva, the supreme god of the universe. It is important to us to follow values such as loyalty, service, honesty, dignity, and intellectual achievements.”

Tom responded, “These values are really important. Several years ago, I was not living a very honorable life. Then a friend told me about the creator God in the Bible. He told me how Jesus, God’s son, will forgive us of our wrongs (sins) if we confess our sins and devote our life to Him. Nerj said, “Please, tell me more.”

Pray that Nagar Brahmins will be open to hearing God’s servants share with them the mercy, grace, love, and glory of the living Lord. May they surrender their lives to God so they can have life to the fullest. Pray for many to be disciplined in His ways.—PD



DAY

06

ANAVIL PEOPLE

(This story is intended to illustrate attitudes of this people group.)

“All over the world our population is sinking; now there are only about 200,000 Anavils worldwide.” The CEO from a large UK import company was amazed to hear this from Gopi, an Anavil who owned one of the most successful tea businesses in India. The CEO responded, “How can that be? Everyone respects Anavils for being intelligent and great administrators. In fact, one of India’s high-ranking politicians said that instead of acting as Brahmin priests, Anavils get involved with politics, so they now have power, wealth, and respect. Then he said that Anavils have the nickname ‘monarch.’” With a smile, he added, “I bet you know how this name came about.”



VSanandhakrishna/iStock/Photos

Gopi answered, “We make this possible by marrying late. We wait till our careers are in order before having children, and even then, we usually only have one child. That has worked well in some ways, but if we don’t change the way we do things, we might as well start preparing a museum of Anavils.” Both men laughed at this grim comment.

Only a few Anavils have accepted Jesus as savior, so pray for spiritual openness to His eternal blessings. Pray that believers will befriend Anavils and clearly show them how God can change their lives for the better. Pray that Anavils will soon be used by God to disciple others in His ways.—PD

JER 4:2, NLV

“Then when you swear by my name, saying, ‘As surely as the Lord lives,’ you could do so with truth, justice, and righteousness. Then you would be a blessing to the nations of the world, and all people would come and praise my name.”

Pray that there will soon come a day when many from the Anavil people will call on the name of the Lord and be saved.

BARDAI PEOPLE

ROM 5: 18, NLV

Yes, Adam's one sin brings condemnation for everyone, but Christ's one act of righteousness brings a right relationship with God and new life for everyone.

Pray for many within the Bardai community to embrace this important fact.

sakhorn38/StockPhotos



The Bardai live in a Brahmin community found mainly in the coastal city of Porbandar, the birth place of Indian statesman, Mahatma Gandhi (see photo).

They originally settled in outlying villages, but eventually migrated to Porbandar in search of a better urban life. As a seaport town, Porbandar became the doorway to the outside world for the Bardais. As a sea port it was only a matter of time before Bardais traveled to Africa, Europe, and North America. Some also live in Uttar Pradesh, a state in north-central India. Many Bardai people speak English because higher education in India is mostly taught in that language.

Bardais are disproportionately represented among overseas Indians due to their high educational levels and marketable skills. They are very influential but for the westerners they are difficult to reach in South Asia. If the Bardais would accept the gifts Jesus offers, they could potentially influence others to do the same. Instead, they frequently adhere to various philosophical and theological beliefs professed by modern Hindus. Modernization is breaking down family units which have been the glue to Indian culture for many generations; loneliness is an increasing problem.

Pray for entire Bardai extended families to embrace what Jesus offers to all who call on His name. Pray for a disciple making movement to emerge among Bardai communities. Pray that the Bardai people will come to know Jesus personally.—KH



SOMPURA COMMUNITY

DAY

08

Sompura is one of the oldest Brahmin sub-castes found in the states of Gujarat and Rajasthan. These people are concentrated in the town of Prabas Patan and form one



istock/Photos

A temple assistant

of the oldest Brahmin communities in Gujarat. They speak Gujarati, and they are strict vegetarians. They avoid garlic and lentils.

According to their traditions, the Sompura were created by the god Chandra to perform sacred ceremonies. Their main profession is priestly services in the temples. Shiva is one of the three main Hindu deities. He is the supreme being within Shaivism, which is one of the major traditions within contemporary Hinduism.

Shiva is the “destroyer of evil and the transformer” within the Hindu trinity that includes Brahma and Vishnu. It is notable that they acknowledge a supreme being, a destroyer of evil, and a trinity – all of which might provide foundational understanding of the need for all three.

The Sompura Brahmin community is respected throughout India for its accomplishments in education and business. The printed online Bible, GRN audio resources, the JESUS Film, and many other resources are available in the Gujarat language, the primary language in the Sompura community.

Pray that Almighty God will draw His people to Himself through dreams, visions, and especially through the word of God. Pray that key members of the Sompura community will understand that Christ is the destroyer of evil.—KH

JN 16:10, NLV

Righteousness is available because I go to the Father, and you will see me no more.

Pray for the Sompura community to find righteousness in Jesus Christ.



SOMPURA SALAT COMMUNITY

PRO 21:21, NLV

Whoever pursues righteousness and unfailing love will find life, righteousness, and honor.

Pray for the Sompura Salat people to pursue righteousness, and in so doing, they will find honor and love in a relationship with the One who created them.

iStockPhotos



This statue could have been carved by a Sompura Salat member

The Sompura Salat community has specialized in masonry works, artistic carvings, and sculpting. Their work is much revered and sought after within India. The term "salat" is derived from Shilavat, an ancient term for either a temple architect or a stone carver. They branched off from the Sompura Brahmin community. They are considered a Brahmin community; however, Sompura Brahmins do not accept them as such. Sompura Salat people are vegetarian, but they also avoid eating onions, garlic, white cucumbers, and lentils.

While their center of activity is in Gujarat and Rajasthan, they now undertake temple architecture in different parts of India as well as their overseas locations which include both England and the United States. Most members of this community are found throughout Gujarat, especially in the Saurashtra region which looks like a huge peninsula.

Pray that these people to whom Creator God gave gifts of masonry, art, carving, stone work, and sculpture will understand the source of these blessings and bow to Him in submission. Pray they will see their desperate need for the one who fully paid the penalty for their sins. Pray that the church will grow and thrive as broken intercessors and disciples are called to labor on behalf of the Sompura Salat people.—KH



BAIRAGI COMMUNITY

DAY

10

Ascetics live frugal and sometimes self-mortifying lives because of their dedication to a deity. So what would you think an ascetic should look like? His long, un-kept hair lets others know his status and devotion to Rama, a Hindu god. In addition to Rama, they worship an incarnation of Vishnu, Kali, and the household and community gods Gouranga and Manaso. While St. Paul called himself a slave of Christ, these Brahmins call themselves slaves of Rama. At the festival of Kumbh Mela, the Bairagi ascetic rings from a throne adored by his followers.



A Bairagi man at the Ganges River

MATT 5:20, NLV

But I warn you—unless your righteousness is better than the righteousness of the teachers of religious law and the Pharisees, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven!

Pray that the Bairagi people will understand that their righteousness must be based on the God of creation, not on what they do.

This Hindu sect numbers some 3.5 million in India. Another 100,000 live outside of India. None are known to have put their faith in Jesus, but could you imagine if people with this level of devotion to spiritual matters were willing to allow the Lord Jesus to come into their lives?

Pray that Jesus will not be seen as a threat to their community, but as the savior of all. Pray that members of the Bairagi community will become intrigued by Jesus, seek information on Him, and put their trust in Him so He can offer them a full life. Pray that many from the Bairagi community will soon become “slaves of Christ” and a blessing to all other communities in India.—TP

DAY

11

KAPADI PEOPLE OF GUJARAT

IS 32:17, NLV

And this righteousness will bring peace. Yes, it will bring quietness and confidence forever.

Pray for this kind of righteousness and peace to come to the Kapadi people.

Create International



Like yesterday's Bairagi people, today's Kapadi group are a prestigious community, however they are less known and less color-

ful. But like the Bairagi people, the Kapadi are to be found in much of India. They claim descent from the warrior Kshatrya caste, so the role their ancestors played was much like European knights. But people from the Kapadi community were not always warriors. Some were students and generous benefactors. Thus, this community encroached on Brahmin prerogatives. In some ceremonies, they are actually seated above the high caste Brahmins. Despite these traditional occupations, they now earn their living in agriculture, as small businessmen, and as employees.

Kapadi people are devoted to the god Kapada Sampradya, who is associated with Rama. There are four groups of Kapadi people in India, each associated with a different Indian state. This is a community loved by God; but as far as we know, none have called out to Him and accepted a relationship with their Creator.

Pray that this group will open itself up to the gospel, and that believers would share the blessings of the Risen Savior with them. Pray that this community which has strong ties to warfare will find peace and joy in the savior.—TP



AUDICH PEOPLE

DAY

12

(This is a fictitious story that illustrates the ways of this people group.)

Suresh was a great story-teller, and his grandchildren loved to hear him tell them about the history of their Audich community. “When did we begin to be different from other Brahmins?” asked a granddaughter. He replied, “We have only been around since 950 AD, so we are a new community. We came together because of the assassination of a Gujarati king! Mulraj Solanki was in the royal family, and he killed everyone in the family, including the king. The Shrimali Brahmin priests were unwilling to officially coronate him as king, and the kingdom was in danger of falling into chaos. Mulraj invited Brahmins from the north to settle in Gujarat to grow crops on the fertile land. His wife offered precious jewels to their wives, so these women really wanted to settle in Gujarat. They came and formed a new Brahmin community called the Audich.”



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HOS 10:12, NLV

“I said, ‘Plant the good seeds of righteousness, and you will harvest a crop of love. Plow up the hard ground of your hearts, for now is the time to seek the Lord, that He may come and shower righteousness upon you.’”

Pray for God’s righteousness and love to come to the Audich community.

Today Audich women don’t have the right to divorce their husbands, nor can widows re-marry. The oldest son becomes the head of the family when the father dies. The Audich people act as priests and astrologers, though some farm or do office work. Though they have benefitted from high status, none have enjoyed the benefits of sitting at the feet of Jesus Christ.

Pray that the Audich people will soon accept the blessings of Jesus, and teach Him to others.—KC



DAY

13

GIRNARA PEOPLE

2 PET 3:13, NLV

But we are looking forward to the new heavens and new earth He has promised, a world filled with God's righteousness.

Pray for the Girnara people to yearn for the day God will fill the earth with His righteousness.

thefinalmiracle/StockPhotos



A traditional Hindu wedding

Who was in Gujarat before the Audich people? One of these communities was the Girnaras, whose name comes from the town of Girinagar, now called Junagadh. Or perhaps their name comes because they lived on the foothills of the Girnar Hills. Most likely they

originated in the Himalayan Mountains. Most of them now live in four districts of Gujarat.

The Girnara people are restricted by their custom of marrying within their community; but marriage between members of various Girnara clans is considered appropriate. Before India became an independent nation in 1947, the Girnaras were the largest landowners in Gujarat's Surashtra region. But because of land reform, this is no longer true. Today the Girnaras are still mainly a landowning community, but many work as Hindu temple priests. They have their own caste association to protect their interests.

Pray for leaders among the Girnara community to open their hearts and minds to what Jesus Christ has to offer them. Pray that those who are temple priests will learn the ways of Christ and share them with all who will listen. Pray for a disciple-making movement among them that will last for generations.—KC



ABOTI PEOPLE

DAY

14

What is the busiest time of year for you? Would it be Christmas, perhaps? Christmas is the time we celebrate the birth of our lord and savior, Jesus Christ,



iStockPhotos

Image of Krishna as a child

who came to take away the sins of the world. The Aboti people are a priestly community that is charged with helping to celebrate the birth of their Hindu god Krishna. This happens around August or September, so now is an excellent time to pray for them! The Abotis live mainly in Gujarat where most work as temple servants.

They are especially involved in performing pujas (Hindu worship practices) at the Dwarkadhis Temple during the festival of Janmashtami. This annual festival involves dance-dramas that reenact the birth of Krishna. These are done by amateur artists who are cheered on by their local communities. There is devotional singing, fasting, a night vigil, and more celebrating later—a time that involves eating sweets when the fast is over. All of this sounds vaguely like some of our practices when we remember the birth of Jesus in late December. Hindus have fun, thanks in part to the efforts of the Aboti people, but there is something missing in their worship.

Pray that soon members of the Aboti people will hear of the savior who came to earth to pay for the sins of all people, and taught us how to live life to the fullest.—KC

JER 9:24, NLV

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 and who brings justice and righteousness to the earth, and that I delight in these things. I, the Lord, have spoken!

Make this your prayer for the Aboti people.

DAY

15

SACHORA COMMUNITY

GAL 5:5, NLV

But we who live by the Spirit eagerly wait to receive by faith the righteousness God has promised to us.

Pray that the Sachora community will eagerly wait on the Lord, and seek His righteousness, not their own righteousness.



Meinzahon /iStockPhotos

Who is more valuable to a community, the farmer or the priest? Within the Sachora community some are land owning farmers who produce valuable

crops. Others serve Krishna and other Hindu gods in an attempt to bring blessings to their community as well as others. Some believe that sweat, hard work, and perseverance is what India needs. Others believe that obedience to the gods will bring blessings, honor, and prosperity. To them, no amount of hard work will make any difference if they offend the gods and bring drought and pests to their farmland.

The Sachora Brahmins migrated to Gujarat from Rajasthan, a state just to the north of Gujarat. This people group started off as priests. Over time some members became farmers. The Sachora Brahmins are true vegetarians. This people group worships Krishna, and there are few, if any, followers of Jesus Christ among them.

Pray that the Sachora Brahmins would develop a hunger for spiritual truth that will lead them to Jesus. May the seeds of true faith be planted in their hearts. Pray for them to hear the word of God and respond to it with faith and joy.—WK



DAY

16

MARWARI PEOPLE

(This is a story that illustrates what could happen among this people group.)

The Marwari businessman stood in the Hindu temple in the state of

Gujarat, surrounded by over a dozen idols. He found a priest and asked him, "What are the rules in order to be blessed by the gods?" "That depends," answered the priest. "Krishna has one set of requirements and Vishnu has another. Brahma asks his followers to do things that are different from those two other gods." "This is confusing," responded the Marwari businessman before slightly changing the subject.

"I'm a businessman, and we have seven rules of business that have made me rich. Aren't there rules for pleasing all the gods?" The priest replied, "Like I said, each god has a different set of rules, so you must choose one to serve." The Marwari walked out of the temple muttering, "Why can't there be just one God with one set of rules?"

Most Marwaris migrated to Gujarat from Rajasthan centuries ago. They are skilled traders who deal in jute, cotton, and sugar. Over time this people group has developed seven rules of business which involves keeping track of money, proper supervision of employees, and establishing the right corporate culture. They have helped them become one of India's most prosperous communities. One fourth of India's billionaires are members of this people group. There are few, if any Marwaris who follow Jesus.

Pray for spiritual direction and truth to come to the Marwari people.—WK



BrianA.Jackson/iStockPhotos

MICAH 6:7-8, NIV

Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with 10,000 rivers of oil? Should I give my first-born to pay for not obeying? Should I give the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? O man, He has told you what is good. What does the Lord ask of you but to do what is fair and to love kindness, and to walk without pride with your God?

Pray for a spiritual awareness within the Marwari people that God requires justice, mercy, and walking humbly with Him, not sacrifices.

PATEL COMMUNITY

PS 103:6, NLV

The Lord gives righteousness and justice to all who are treated unfairly.

Pray for the Lord to provide His justice to all who suffer from violence in India.

RadioKukka/iStock



(This story is based on actual events.)

Haji was a Patel from the state of Gujarat, and he'd always voted for the Hindu nationalist BJP Party. In

recent years more and more of his Patel friends had started voting for the more inclusive Congress Party. Out of curiosity Haji walked to the city plaza to hear Congress Party members give speeches. Shortly after he arrived all hell broke loose. Policemen ran into the plaza and began beating people with their batons. Haji ran and was almost knocked over by the fleeing crowd. Somehow Haji got out of the plaza unhurt, but many others weren't so lucky.

Centuries ago the Patels were farmers. More recently this caste had become some of India's most successful businessmen. Today the Patels produce 22 percent of all the goods in the state of Gujarat. The Patels also dominate many departments in Gujarat's state government, but not the police force. In recent years the police have cracked down on Patel-based political rallies. A few people have been killed and many injured. There are few, if any, followers of Jesus Christ among these Hindus.

Pray for God to protect this community from outbreaks of violence. Pray that the Patels will come to see Jesus Christ as the only source of peace and safety. Ask God to raise up faithful workers to reach out to this people group.—WK



DAY

18

AGARWAL BANIA COMMUNITY

(This is a story which illustrates what could happen among this people group.)



iStockPhotos

Indian currency

Raji was a rich member of the Bania caste in the state of Gujarat. He owned land, houses, and cars. He had every reason to feel secure, but he didn't. The story told by the foreigner haunted him. "A rich farmer didn't have room in his barns to store his latest harvest, so he decided to build larger barns. But a voice from the sky told him he would die that night." As he walked down the city street Raji went over the details of the foreigner's story. He didn't know that the story was based on one from the Bible.

The Banias were once clearly the richest people group in the state of Gujarat. Now they are being challenged by the Patels, whom we prayed for yesterday. Many members of this people group claim to be Hindu, but don't really practice that religion. Most Banias think they are too powerful to need Jesus Christ or any other god. There are only a few followers of Jesus Christ among them.

Ask God to humble the Agarwal Banias and give them spiritual refreshment through Jesus. Pray that believers who love God and His creation will reach out to the Agarwal Banias.—WK

PHIL 3:9, NLV

... I no longer count on my own righteousness through obeying the law; rather, I become righteous through faith in Christ. For God's way of making us right with Himself depends on faith.

Pray that many members of the Agarwal Bania community will seek and find righteousness through faith in Christ.

DAY

19

OSWAL PEOPLE

PS 36:6, NKJV

Your righteousness
is like the mighty
mountains, your justice
like the ocean depths.
You care for people and
animals alike, O Lord.

*May the Oswal people
fall in love with the God
who cares for all life
on earth!*

iStockPhotos



Oswals are Banias who carry a lot of prestige and are influential in business, industry, politics, and Indian society. They live in the states of

Maharashtra, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan. They celebrate notable days with colorful, musical festivals. The women perform folksongs and traditional dances at these festivals as well as at weddings and birth celebrations. Many embrace Jain teachings, which consider it a sin to take a life. Consequently, the people are vegetarians. Their dishes are based on wheat, rice, maize, lentils, vegetables, fruit, and dairy products. But special occasions are marked with mouthwatering desserts.

Although many Oswal people believe in Jainism, others practice Hinduism. Both religions teach reincarnation. Thus, the people are motivated to do good in order to improve with each life they live until they attain perfection and become one with the divine.

Pray that they will instead know the God who has offered them a relationship with Him through His son Jesus Christ. May these people who believe that it is a sin to take a life come to a knowledge of Jesus, whose life was freely given to pay the price for sinful mankind. Pray that the Oswal community will understand that they do not have to attain perfection on their own merit, but they can lean on Jesus the perfect one.—CMW



SRIMALI COMMUNITY

DAY

20

Can you think of things that people are too polite to talk about, yet they reflect issues that affect their daily lives? The Hindu caste system is maddeningly complicated and fascinating but causes some strange dynamics.



A high caste youth working at a gas station

For example, out of the four caste clusters, the third one, which includes the Banias and other business communities, is sometimes the wealthiest. Because of their relatively low status in the Hindu hierarchy but their high economic standing, Banias have often been leaders in caste reform. One of the most noted Banias is the great Indian statesman, Mahatma Gandhi.

Banias originated in the western states of Gujarat and Rajasthan, but the Srimali Banias now live all over India. Historically, they were grain and spice traders, but they have long been involved in trade, business, and money-lending. They are also engaged in law, academia, and technology. Half of the Srimali Bania people name Hinduism as their religion, and others embrace Jainism, an offshoot of Hinduism.

Pray that God will shower the Srimali Bania community with spiritual riches that even exceed their earthly riches. Ask the Heavenly Father to open the hearts of the Srimali Banias to lay up their treasures in heaven. Pray for Christ's disciples to reach out in a culturally sensitive way to the Banias with the person of Jesus Christ.—CMW

EZ 22:30, NLV

I looked for someone who might rebuild the wall of righteousness that guards the land. I searched for someone to stand in the gap in the wall, so I wouldn't have to destroy the land, but I found no one.

Pray for the Lord to raise up many from the Srimali community to build a wall of righteousness that will guard India. May they stand in the gap in prayer for their nation.

DAY

21

ARORAS IN GUJARAT

1 THES 5: 16-18, NLV

Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

Pray that the Aroras of India may find true joy in Jesus Christ, not in the many gods and traditions of Hinduism.

iStockPhotos



An Indian teacher

Most of the Hindu Aroras lived in what is now Pakistan before the Partition of India in 1947. They were forced to flee for their lives with only the clothes they were wearing during that time of violence and genocide. Even though the Aroras make up only a tiny percentage of India's population, their influence is far beyond their numbers. Some Aroras are Muslim or Sikh, but we are praying today for the Hindu Aroras in Gujarat.

Hindu Aroras stress higher education for their children. Consequently, they achieve high positions in Indian society in medicine, law, administration, and the military. However, they are mostly known for their business acumen. They excel in trade and banking. Aroras live primarily in the cities of northern and west central India, including Gujarat. They marry mostly within their own people but can also marry within the larger Kshatriya caste cluster. The first language of most Aroras is Hindi so Christian material is available to them including an entire Bible.

Pray that the Lord would send Christ's disciples to the Hindu Aroras to befriend them and develop Christ-honoring, redemptive relationships. Pray that the Lord will open the hearts of the Aroras to the gospel, and that a church planting movement would begin among them. Pray that the Aroras would find their identity and security in Christ rather than their money, education or position in society.—DK



DAY

22

LOHANA PEOPLE

The Lohanas have a history that spans many centuries in South Asia. They see themselves as members of the ancient Kshatriyas, a community that originally consisted



iStockPhotos/Tarzan9280

Indian military personnel

of the ruling and military elite. They were responsible for protecting their society in wartime and for governing their society in times of peace.

Consisting of nearly 600,000 people, today over 99 percent of them follow Hinduism. Throughout the centuries the Lohana have been dominated by Buddhists and Muslims, something which might partially explain why they are so dedicated to Hinduism. Originally migrating from what is now Pakistan, they worshiped Hindu gods like Shankar and Srinath plus family and clan deities. They also hire Brahmin priests to perform religious duties.

Today they are divided into groups that serve as government workers, traders, and merchants. But they are best known as merchants. Their community council provides financial aid to the poor and assists worthy students in their education with scholarships.

The caste system discourages anyone from having social interaction with members of other communities. Since most believers are from less prestigious communities, they have very little chance to take Christ to the Lohana people.

Pray that Indian believers would cross cultural barriers and reach out to the Lohana people with valuable resources. Thank the Father that He will answer our prayers for the Lohana community.—JY

IS 9:2, NLV

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.

Pray that soon the Lohana people will find the great light, Jesus Christ.

SONAR (AKA, SONI) PEOPLE

ACTS 3:6, NLT

But Peter said, "I don't have any silver or gold for you. But I'll give you what I have. In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, get up and walk!"

Pray that the Sonar people will soon receive the riches of Christ that are worth far more than gold.

paulprescott72/iStockPhotos



Spread over 33 states, the Sonar goldsmiths speak 61 languages. The 371,000 Sonars in Gujarat are also called the Soni. Known for their work with gold and silver, the Sonars produce elaborate jewelry

and ornaments, using precious and semi-precious stones. Some engrave deities on plates of gold and silver as well as pendants. Others cut and polish diamonds. Typically, the Sonars own their own jewelry stores, while others are paid for skilled designs in delicate filigree. Sonar gold jewelry is greatly sought after for weddings in India.

The Sonar community encourages literacy among their children. Many pursue post-secondary education, with some becoming professionals, serving in trades or retail or working as politicians at various government levels. The Sonars are effective money-managers, wisely investing and saving money. Some wealthier Sonars become money-lenders.

Almost all Sonar people are Hindu. There are few if any followers of Christ among them. However, a complete Bible, biblical audio recordings, and The JESUS Film are available in Gujarati.

Ask God to inspire focused, sustained prayer for the Sonars. Pray for God to send workers to the Sonar people who can effectively relate to this wealthy community. Pray for softened Sonar hearts to seek the forgiveness of sins found only through Jesus.—CR



DAY

24

BHATIA PEOPLE

(This fictional account is intended to depict the religious practices of this people group.)



Woman praying by a sacred peepal tree

Sujoy Govindaraj/iStockPhotos

PS 97:6, NIV

The heavens proclaim His righteousness; every nation sees His glory.

Pray for the Bhatia people to see the matchless glory of the Lord and flock to Him.

Ayaan held his breath as the guru draped the sacred thread over his shoulder and down to his waist. The boy was wearing munja grass around his midsection and was clutching a branch from a peepal tree in his right hand (see photo). Together, it symbolized his entrance into the student stage of his life. He glanced over and saw his parents watching, both of them beaming with pride. His younger brother was there too, his eyes wide. In another couple of years, it would be his turn to go through the ceremony and begin the serious study of Hinduism.

The Bhatia people are nearly 100 percent Hindu. Hindus are very diverse; they have all kinds of ceremonies, and they have literally hundreds of millions of gods and goddesses to choose from. There are approximately 230,000 Bhatias scattered across northwestern India and eastern Pakistan. The Bible is available in the language of the Bhatia, along with numerous video and audio scripture resources. Yet they have not responded to the gospel message.

Pray for the Bhatias to have the opportunity to encounter the true and living God. Ask the Lord to prepare their hearts to receive and embrace Jesus Christ as lord. Pray that God will raise up Bhatia believers who will tell others about the savior as eagerly as a man who has just found the secret to eternal life.—CL

MAIYA RAJPUTS

HEB 11:7, NLV

It was by faith that Noah built a large boat to save his family from the flood. He obeyed God, who warned him about things that had never happened before. By his faith Noah condemned the rest of the world, and he received the righteousness that comes by faith.

Pray for the Maiya Rajputs to have the faith and righteousness God wants them to enjoy.

PocholoCalapre/iStockPhotos



How would you like a name that means, “Son of a king”? That’s what Rajput means. They were formerly ruling class warrior clans with impressive palaces and large

forts in north, west, and central India. Their princely states disappeared when India became independent in 1947. Their Rajput name is now hereditary.

Maiya Rajputs have been in the state of Gujarat since the 16th century. Unlike most Hindus, the Maiya Rajputs are mostly non-vegetarians, regular drinkers of alcohol, and smokers.

Annually, each Maiya Rajputs family constructs a small altar. After reciting Hindu mantras and singing hymns, they start a fire. A family member brings offerings, invites the gods, recites prayers, and blows a conch shell. Items like milk, grains, coconuts, incense and herbs, are poured into the fire. They hope that the gods will give them strength and influence their lives.

We know where these people live, but as far as we know, no one has tried to share the blessings of Jesus Christ with them. Many Christian resources are available in the Gujarati language spoken by the Maiya Rajputs. The entire Bible has been translated into Gujarati. There is also a version of the JESUS Film.

Pray that the Maiya Rajputs will hear the gospel message and discover that, through the sacrifice of Jesus, they can become sons and daughters of the King of kings!—AHS

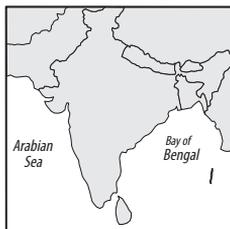


DAY

26

VALA CLAN

A large, solitary peninsula juts out on India's northwestern Arabian Sea coast in the state of Gujarat. This large peninsula, Saurashtra, encompasses nearly a third of Gujarat.



Vala clan members from one of India's 24 clan villages proudly remember their great ancestor Shiladitya. He was the Valabhi (Vala) ruler of Gujarat. He was their ancient leader who guided them to be the earliest Rajput settlers in the Saurashtra Peninsula. But clans, even from other Rajputs, would fight against each other in their jostling for power. After their leader was overthrown long ago, the Vala clan shifted to the southwestern region of the peninsula.



Today, the Valas are not rulers of the nation or the state, but they still "rule" as landowners. They still retain power, wealth, and intelligence just like their great ancestor Shiladitya proved. God blesses them, and they are a blessing to India.

Yet the Valas do not know their powerful ancient leader who still wants to guide them in a spiritual battle. Like Shiladitya, Jesus Christ wants them to overcome that which oppresses them, give them freedom to live more fully, and bless them in this life and the life to come.

Pray that this Rajput clan will encounter the truth of Jesus and will someday join us in heaven singing His praises.—LR

PS 89:14, NLV

Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne. Unfailing love and truth walk before you as attendants.

May the Vala clan truly desire the righteousness and justice of the true King of glory!

DODIYA PEOPLE

JER 23:6, NIV

And this will be his name: 'The Lord is our righteousness.' In that day Judah will be saved, and Israel will live in safety.

Pray that the Dodiya Rajputs will soon identify with the Son of David, the savior of the world.

Raaskohx10/iStockPhotos



A Baloch man

"I met a son of David!" the Dodiya (or Dodia) man exclaimed to the crowd that had gathered. "He was fierce, just like us. He told the stories of battles of our ancestors. He remembers and honors

them." The crowd nodded, listening intently. The Dodiya man was speaking to the Rajput villagers about an ethnic Baloch man he'd met on a bus. This man shared lineage to the Rajput clan founder, Doda Sumra. These kinsmen are also referred to as "sons of David."

Dodiya is a Rajput clan found in Gujarat. Doda Sumra, their originator, had been driven from his home by his brothers. He escaped by swimming his horse across the Indus River. Soaked and nearly frozen, he reached a hut of a family from another tribe, the Baloch. To save the poor stranger, a Baloch man laid Doda under the blankets with his daughter, whom he later married. "For the woman's sake," says the proverb, "The man became a Baloch who had been a nobody; he dwelt (with them), and fate made him chief of all." That is the story of how Doda founded the great Dodiya Baloch tribe.

Pray that the Dodiya will be blessed with the understanding of this truth: He who was king became a man, a nobody who dwelt with humanity. Pray that Jesus will reveal Himself as the Son of David to the Dodiyas.—LR



JAINS IN GUJARAT

DAY

28

India is the birthplace of two of the largest world religions: Hinduism and Buddhism. What few realize is that there is a third, smaller religion born in India, Jainism. It is a religion of peace; Jains believe that living a life of harmlessness leads to liberation from evil. Jains believe that all plants and animals contain a soul



iStockPhotos

A Jain altar

like humans, and they adhere to a vegetarian diet. They are concerned about the welfare of every being in the universe. Although many of its beliefs are shared with the Hindu religion such as reincarnation, it is unique in its origin and practices.

Although Jains can be found worldwide, most live in the northern Indian states like Gujarat. They are highly educated and can be found in all professions. Jains would be considered by many to be perfect neighbors or citizens, and they live by noble principles. Yet they lack what all mankind needs to seek and find: reconciliation with their creator and forgiveness of sins. They need a relationship with Jesus, the one who brings true peace and forgiveness.

Let us pray that the lord of the harvest will put it in the hearts of Christ's ambassadors to be bold in sharing this good news with their Jain colleagues, neighbors, and friends. Pray for Jains to study God's word and embrace Jesus as their lord.—JS

PS 85:10, NLV

Unfailing love and truth
have met together.
Righteousness and peace
have kissed!

Pray that the peace-loving Jains in Gujarat will embrace the righteousness that Jesus Christ offers all who willingly call on His name.

DAY
29

CHURCH PLANTING EFFORTS

HEB 13:8, NIV

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Pray that the people who will hear the gospel in northern India will embrace the never-changing, perfect savior of the world!

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Where is one of the most unreached regions of the world? It's the heartland of northern India, home of tens of millions of Hindus

and Muslims. One team is trying to plant churches among unreached people groups and in poor urban communities. The gospel message hasn't changed from its inception. When Jesus sent out his disciples two by two, He told them to find a person of peace. What does that mean? It is someone who is open to the gospel message, who is hungry for spiritual things, and who is eager to share what they've learned.

This team works closely with a large network of house churches. They encourage leaders to entrust responsibilities to each member which they believe leads to multiplication. They share with them the principles of discipleship and the tools to connect well enough so that any person can learn to replicate them. It is basically each person sharing and teaching another person what they know about Jesus so that they can in turn tell someone else. This method of reproducing in the first century turned the world upside down.

Pray for these teams to find persons of peace. Pray for this team that works alongside a large network of Indian believers to equip and encourage them to fulfill the great commission. Pray that believers will enthusiastically share their faith with others and equip them in what they have been taught.—JS



DAY

30

ALL NATIONS MISSION INDIA

Despite growing persecution against believers in India, the church is growing, and God is blessing the work! For a long time India was on the receiving end of world mission efforts. But now there are increasingly more indigenous mission agencies working to reach every home and village with the gospel.



All Nations Mission India is an organization in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh. How do they get the message of Christ to villages? Motorbikes are the basic mode of transportation. One pastor on a motorbike becomes an itinerate pastor traveling from village to village.

All of the pastors must raise their own support. Many are not highly educated, but they are all eager to learn more about sharing the gospel message. As often as possible, they participate in training sessions for pastors and leaders so they can learn how to grow in their personal relationship with Jesus Christ. God has particularly used healings to draw Indian people to Himself, and this has been true in All Nations Mission India's worship services. Their efforts also include social welfare. Many villages need access to clean water. Boring wells has brought clean water along with the water of life to villagers.

*Praise God for those responding to the gospel message!
Pray for their needs to be met by Indian believers.—JS*

1 TIM 6:11, NIV

But you, Timothy, are a man of God; so run from all these evil things. Pursue righteousness and a godly life, along with faith, love, perseverance, and gentleness.

Make this your prayer for every missionary sent out by All Nations Mission India.

"Christian Barriers . . . is a path-breaking work which examines systematically the obvious, and, the more subtle, factors that keep most Indian people from becoming disciples of Jesus Christ."

—Peter Ignatius, President, Lakeview Bible College & Seminary Chennai, India

CHRISTIAN BARRIERS TO JESUS

Conversations and Questions from the Indian Context

J. Paul Pennington

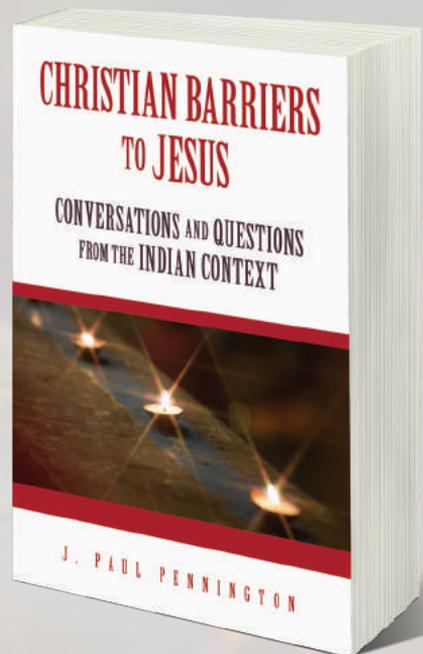
Hindus often have a high view of Jesus, but they struggle with traditions and customs around Christianity and church. *Christian Barriers to Jesus* uniquely challenges readers to examine nine barrier-producing Christian traditions from three perspectives:

- Concerns Hindus commonly raise about the traditions
- Assumptions Christians may hold about the traditions
- Teachings of Jesus and Scripture that often question the Christian traditions that confuse, offend, and alienate Hindus from Jesus.

This book suggests that we are not asking deep enough questions about what is essential for following Jesus and what is non-essential human invention. If we truly care about Jesus, we must honestly address where those non-essential traditions unnecessarily alienate millions of people from him.

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"This book weaves together stories of successes and failures, struggles and triumphs of the China Inland Mission. There is much food for thought in this book for those who are grappling with critical issues in modern day missions."

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NO SOLITARY EFFORT

How the CIM Worked to Reach the Tribes of Southwest China

Neel Roberts

No Solitary Effort describes how members of the China Inland Mission engaged the tribes of Southwest China as part of their comprehensive plan to evangelize all of China from 1865 to 1951. That endeavor required the combined lifelong efforts of numerous missionaries, spanned several generations, and was invariably affected by events and decisions that occurred thousands of miles from where the actual ministry was taking place. The task was incomplete when the missionaries were forced to leave, but the foundations for the Church which were laid have stood. This book addresses the great challenges to cooperation that faced the missionaries. It also reveals the rich rewards that were obtained by the united efforts of committed Christians who had no timetable for withdrawal, but only an unwavering commitment to work together until the task was accomplished.

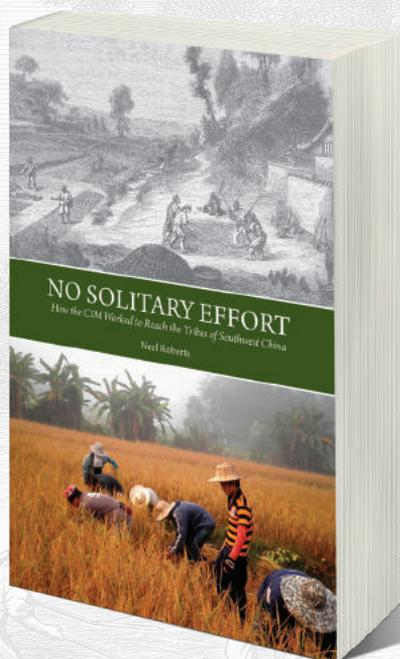
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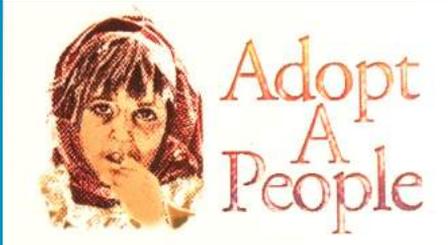


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