

JUNE 2023

“And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us.”

Acts 17:26-27

ANSWER TO YOUR PRAYER

In November 2022, we focused on praying for the gospel to advance in Istanbul, Turkey. The earthquakes in Syria and Turkey this year reminded us to keep praying. God is answering our prayers.

A young family in Istanbul started visiting a local church with their believing friends.

Ayşe, the fiancée of a new believer, trusted in Christ as her Savior. Renee, another new believer, connected with a local church in Istanbul and is being disciplined.

PRAYERPOINTS

THE DUNGAN OF CENTRAL ASIA

The 120,000 Dungan people of Central Asia live in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. This Muslim people group once, however, lived in China and were called Hui. The Dungan’s unique heritage distinguishes them from most other Central Asian peoples in many ways, but one thing is the same: they have a critical need for God to open their hearts to the truth and beauty of the gospel of Christ.

DUNGAN: A MINORITY PEOPLE GROUP WITH A HYBRID CULTURE

Dungan people say: “We get our food and language from our mother and our religion from our father,” and it’s true. They eat with chopsticks and are known for their delicious Chinese-influenced cuisine. Meanwhile, they cling to their Muslim identity.

Centuries ago, Persian and Arabic traders traveled the Silk Road into China and married Chinese women. Their descendants became the Muslim Chinese people called Hui. Over the years, Hui people emigrated into Central Asia and were called by the Russian name, Dungan. During a 19th century war in China, many Dungan relocated to Central Asia and began to farm in what is now southern Kazakhstan and northern Kyrgyzstan.

In time, the Dungan people established themselves in Central Asia and flourished. They developed a reputation for making money. Today, in addition to farming, many Dungan dominate the business world. Others make good wages as long-haul truck drivers. Dungan cafes serving Chinese hot pot



A Dungan man cooking rice. IMB Photo.

have risen in popularity even among the majority population.

Like most Central Asians, the Dungan do not separate Islam from their ethnicity. And they don’t ask questions of their Muslim religious leaders, even when they don’t understand what they are taught. Their Islam is mixed with Eastern animistic ideas—many Dungan visit their ancestors’ graves during Ramadan and ask for help. The spiritual needs among the Dungan are great, yet few have eyes to see.

Pray that the Lord will cause many Dungan to hear the gospel. Ask Him to open blind eyes to see and believe in Jesus as the only way to God.

1 DUNGAN. Earlier this year, one believer who was loved and respected by many passed away. The tributes and testimonies after his death told of his commitment to Jesus and the hope believers in Christ have for eternal life. Pray for those who are now more open to spiritual discussions to come to faith during this time of spiritual sensitivity.

2 DUNGAN. Some Dungan seekers have connected online with other believers and have expressed interest in listening to audio Bible stories. Pray that God will give these seekers a desire to meet with believers for Bible study.

3 DUNGAN. Dungan people's devotion to Islam has grown in recent years. They try to please God by reciting prayers in a language they don't understand, wearing conservative clothing, and journeying to Mecca. Ask the Lord to expose the futility of these efforts.

4 DUNGAN. Lamzar is seriously seeking truth and has even admitted that he believes Jesus is God. Pray that he will find a local church to attend. Ask God to provide believers that will be eager to disciple him and teach him the Word.

5 DUNGAN. Pray for Dungan who are working on an oral Bible translation. Pray the Scriptures they work on translating would sink deeply into their hearts and minds, transforming them greater into the image of Christ.

6 DUNGAN. Many Dungan villages and neighborhoods have no gospel witness. Ask the Lord to raise up believers, even from

among the majority Kyrgyz and Kazakh church, to live among them and be salt and light in the darkness.

7 DUNGAN. Rahim and Lydia are believers living outside the Dungan homeland. They struggle with depression, doubt, and a lack of unity in their marriage. Pray the Lord will restore their wavering faith and do a mighty work in them. Pray for one woman who has agreed to mentor them.

8 DUNGAN. Within the Dungan community, there is a great fear of asking questions or going against the status quo. Pray that the Lord will give courage to many Dungan to ask questions and begin searching for the truth.

9 DUNGAN. A 70-year-old Dungan man has led a small house fellowship for 20 years. He struggles with depression and declining physical health. Pray for healing, hope, fresh vision, and wisdom in transitioning his group to other leaders.

10 DUNGAN. Pray for gospel fruit from Dungan youth who have encountered truth through English and Chinese language lessons. Pray that the students will understand the gospel's relevance for their own lives and come to faith and repentance.

11 DUNGAN. Pray the Lord will open doors for Dungan men and women to meet and interact with believers in many areas of life including health and wellness. Ask God to direct and help believers who work in the medical field as they seek to be a light in the darkness.

12 DUNGAN. Pray that the Lord will give Dungan believers a desire to share the good news with their neighbors, friends, and coworkers. Ask God to give them discernment and boldness to share the truth of Christ's substitutionary death and resurrection.

13 DUNGAN. Several ministries seek to help the poor and needy from Dungan communities. Pray that those receiving aid will come to know the love of Jesus who cares for the helpless.

14 DUNGAN. Dungan believers are spread out, and few feel a need to connect. Pray that Dungan believers will desire to meet together for encouragement and support. Ask God to give them unity.

15 DUNGAN. Many Dungan men have become long-haul truck drivers. Pray for these men and others who live abroad to encounter the gospel while outside their homeland. Pray that the Lord will help them understand the gospel and put their faith in Christ.

16 DUNGAN. Pray for believers who connect regularly with Dungan communities. Ask the Lord to protect and guard them from danger. May the peace of Christ rule in their hearts (Colossians 3:15). Pray that God will bring much fruit from their labors.

17 DUNGAN. Many Dungan say that Christians basically believe the same things as Muslims. Pray God will give those who hear the good news ears to hear that what Jesus offers is different than anything Islam offers.

18 DUNGAN. A Dungan man reads the Word when he is on a break at work. Please ask the Holy Spirit to help him understand the person and work of Christ. May this man come to faith and repentance.

19 DUNGAN. One young Dungan couple recently heard testimonies of believers who came to faith. They heard how Christ gives hope and peace to those who belong to him. Pray that Lord will open their hearts to want to learn more.

20 DUNGAN. A woman brought her children with her to church and taught them to trust Jesus. Now in their late teens, the daughter is out of the house, and the son is straying. Pray that her son will return to the Lord and that her husband will become a follower of Jesus too.

21 DUNGAN. Pray the Lord will open doors and provide a way to make online gospel resources in the Dungan language, including the full Bible in audio form. Ask God to bring a great harvest from each online resource.

22 DUNGAN. Salima lives in a remote village and has been listening to the audio Bible and reading passages from the Word. She is also connected online to a believer. Pray that Salima will be open to hearing stories about Jesus. Pray the Lord will open her heart to understand the way of salvation through Christ.

23 DUNGAN. Please pray for a believer who is dealing with spiritual attacks at work. It seems that some people are truly trying to harm him. Pray that he will call on the name of Jesus for protection and be bold in sharing his faith with



A farmer brings in hay from his field along a highway in Kyrgyzstan. The highway follows the historic Silk Road trading route. IMB Photo.

those who would hurt him.

24 DUNGAN. Some Dungan Bible translators “test” their work with their Muslim family members. As these family members encounter Scripture, some of them ask deep, thoughtful questions. Pray that the Holy Spirit will open their hearts and bring entire families into the kingdom of God.

25 DUNGAN. After hearing about Jesus for eight years, a Dungan woman came to faith when she saw Jesus in a dream and experienced healing from chronic leg pain. She has been baptized and is connected to a local fellowship. Pray for her faith to grow and for God’s provision in her health, finances, and legal difficulties.

26 DUNGAN. Many Dungan feel satisfied with all they are doing to please God through their outward works. Pray that God will break this self-sufficiency and pride and help them understand the severity of their sin against a holy God.

27 DUNGAN. Pray for an older man who has spent years in contact with believers. He says he desires peace like theirs. He interacts deeply on spiritual matters, yet he seems afraid to believe because of what his family might do. Pray for him and for his whole family to come to faith.

28 DUNGAN. Pray that many Dungan people will encounter gospel material online. Pray that it would touch their hearts and cause them to seek out more. May they respond in faith and repentance as they encounter truth online.

29 DUNGAN. Many Dungan believers feel timid about sharing their faith. Pray that the Lord will give them strength, perseverance, and boldness to live faithfully among their family and friends, and proclaim the truth of Jesus to the lost.

30 DUNGAN. A Dungan man who was a former Muslim exorcist experienced a dramatic deliverance from demonic oppression when he confessed his sins and asked Jesus to live in him. Pray that he will desire to listen to God’s Word. Pray for wisdom for the believer who visits him.



The outdoor bazaar in Osh, Kyrgyzstan. IMB Photo.

ISLAM'S HOLD ON THE DUNGAN

Most Dungan are committed to following their leaders and community traditions. An increasing social pressure to be more Islamic has impacted women in the community. Girls as young as nine recite Islamic prayers, and village women attend Quran lessons led by female teachers. But not all women are following the crowd.

Praise God that a small group of Dungan woman have found gospel truth online and have listened to audio Bible stories in the primary Dungan dialect, Gansu. Ask the Lord

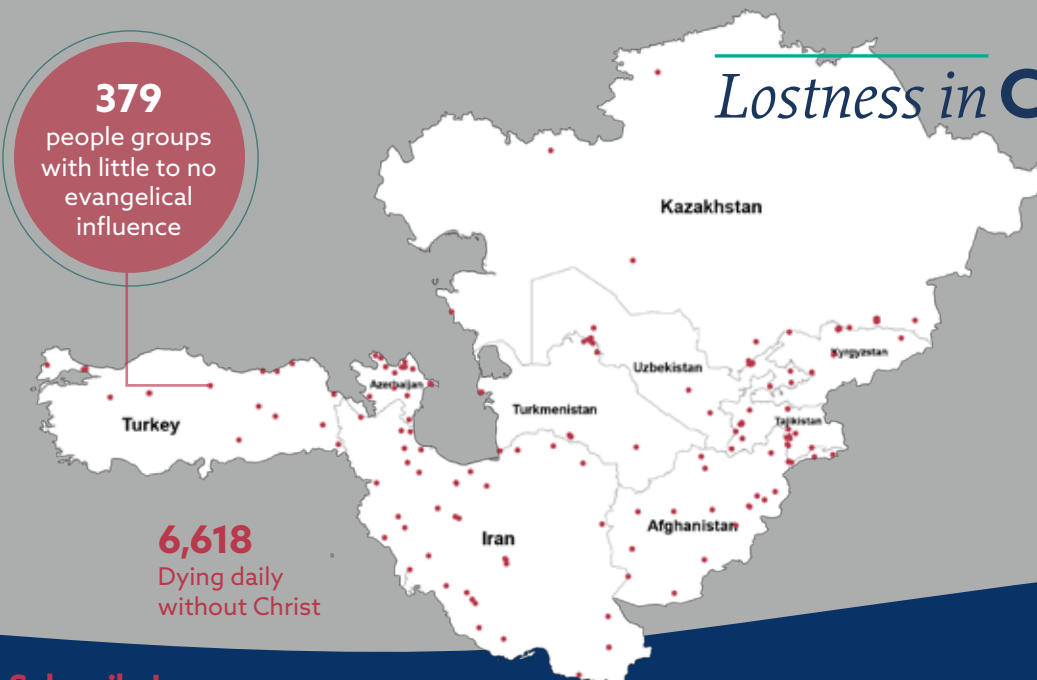
to open their hearts to want to know more. Pray that He will give them understanding about Jesus being the Savior who died for their sins.

Pray that more Dungan people will discover audio and video resources in Gansu: including the "JESUS" film, multiple Old and New Testament stories, and a complete Book of the New Testament. Most Dungan do not read and write in their heart language. Even with these audio and video resources, spiritual fruit is slow. Thank you for praying.

HINTS OF A HARVEST AMONG THE DUNGAN

Among the 120,000 Dungan people in Central Asia, there are 40 known believers. One of these Dungan believers is translating gospel resources into his language. A Dungan couple moved to a village to be a gospel witness. One woman is working tirelessly online to reach other Dungan across Central Asia. The spiritual tide is moving deeper into Islam, and the work among Dungan is slow, but many gospel seeds have been sown.

Pray that God will send believers to live among all pockets of Dungan people in Central Asia. Ask Him to connect seekers with believers for discipleship relationships. Please pray for the Lord of the harvest to bring many Dungan into His kingdom.



Lostness in CENTRAL ASIA

The Persian, Turkic, and Kurdish people groups who call Central Asia home are unreached. The people groups of Central Asia are Muslim and have little knowledge of Biblical Christianity and are unaware that the gospel is good news.

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**REACHING
THE NATIONS,
TOGETHER.**