

9 WAYS TO PRAY FOR THE UNREACHED

and the missionaries who are reaching them





What is an unreached people group?

While there are various definitions of unreached people groups (UPGs), Advancing Native Missions describes them as a people group that has little to no access to the Gospel message and contains less than 2% of professing evangelical believers.

Identifying people groups and ascertaining if 2% are believers or not is difficult. While we use Joshua Project for many of our statistics, we also rely on the native missionaries currently working on the field. Native missionaries are experts who can often provide a more detailed account of what's happening in their area.

Regardless of exactly who is gathering statistics and information, we know that over 3 billion people, which is almost half of the world, has never heard the Gospel. And by the grace of God, we're going to do everything we can to change that.

How do we reach UPGs?

One of the most effective ways to reach unreached people groups is native missionaries. Native missionaries don't need a passport to work with a UPG. They already live in the country, often in a local area close to the UPG. They don't have to worry about extra paperwork like visa sponsorships. Instead, they can focus their energy on reaching their unreached neighbors. Without the need for a passport or international travel, their transportation costs are also lower.

Living in the area at the local economic level doesn't just lower transportation costs—it lowers rent prices, grocery bills, and more that enable financial support to go further. Since the missionaries are from that area, they also already know the local language and culture.

Language and cultural knowledge improves communication, so there are fewer barriers to the Gospel presentation. Our native missionaries are currently sharing the Gospel, starting churches, and making disciples among 1,100 of the 7,220 unreached people groups around the world.

This prayer guide was created to introduce you to nine of those people groups, and the native missionaries (or missionary couples) who are reaching them. An asterisk * beside their name(s) means their name(s) were changed for security.

Meet the Yi of Southwest China

The Yi community in southwest China are a collectivist culture, where an individual who becomes a Christian often faces rejection or punishment from the extended family. Long-term poverty and limited education have made it difficult for people to think about life or faith, while widespread issues of alcohol, smoking, and drug abuse further hinder spiritual reflection. Deep-rooted idol worship and ancestral rituals within families form significant spiritual obstacles as well.

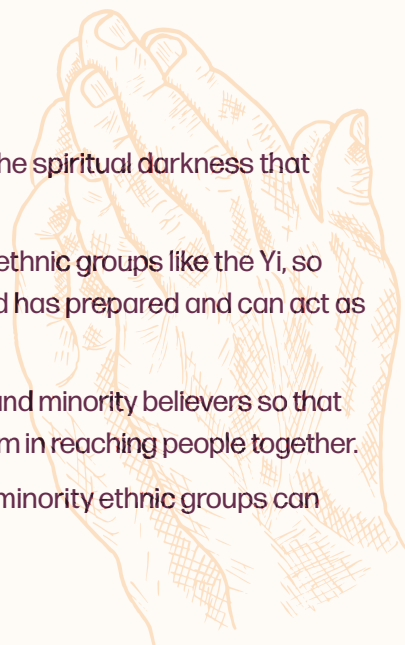


An undisclosed ministry primarily focuses on reaching the Yi people in the Liangshan region of Sichuan province, southwest China. Local Yi co-workers are serving in partnership with outside supporters. A church in Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan, is mobilized to accompany and support Yi believers on a long-term basis.

Local and Chengdu-based believers have worked together to assist 22 Yi youth in gaining access to education. Local Yi co-workers continue to mentor and care for these students on weekends and organize annual summer camps for their growth and fellowship. Humanitarian aid such as education and summer camps is one of the best ways to share the Gospel in this closed country.

HOW TO PRAY

- Pray that the light of Christ will break through the spiritual darkness that enslaves minority groups like the Yi.
- Pray for the rise of “persons of peace” among ethnic groups like the Yi, so that local missionaries go to people whom God has prepared and can act as Gospel bridges.
- Pray for unity between Han Chinese churches and minority believers so that there will be mutual respect in Christ and wisdom in reaching people together.
- Pray for the growth of native missions so that minority ethnic groups can effectively reach their own people.



Meet the Maguindanao in the Philippines

The Maguindanao are a predominantly Muslim people group in the southern Philippines, surrounded by other Muslim groups such as the Maranaos and Tausug. All three people groups are deeply committed to their Sunni Muslim faith, but also mix in traditional island spiritual beliefs, such as using charms or amulets. They tend to view Christians, especially Catholics, as enemies.



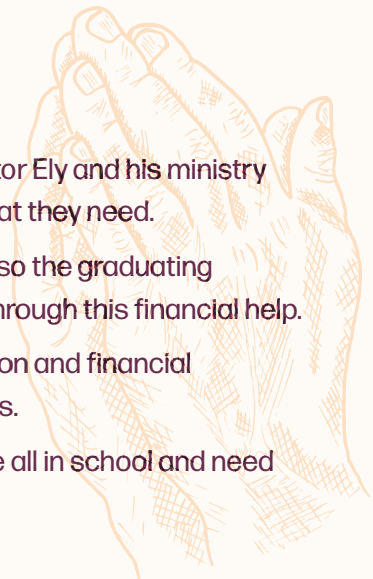
Boys receive the most education as they read and memorize the Koran. Pastor Ely and his ministry provides more comprehensive education access, which helps them share the Gospel.

Pastor Ely is a native Filipino who attended Bible school, graduated, and worked for a church, serving as a minister for 28 years. In 2006, he moved out of church work to full-time missions reaching Maguindanao Muslims in his area.

Ely and his wife, along with three volunteers, work in two local areas reaching these Muslims, as well as the Muslim Maranaos and Tausug living nearby. He's also working to meet other practical needs, such as food, to continue living out the Gospel.

HOW TO PRAY

- Pray for a car and a rice farm, which will provide Pastor Ely and his ministry with the transportation, income, and food stability that they need.
- Pray for financial needs for graduation ceremonies, so the graduating Muslim students can experience the love of Christ through this financial help.
- Pray for ministry volunteers, especially their protection and financial provision, as they go into potentially dangerous areas.
- Pray for Ely's family, especially his children, as they're all in school and need good health.



Meet the Miri Tribe of South Asia

The Miri, also called Mising, tribe of South Asia are secluded, scattered along the borders of Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, and Myanmar. Based on where they live, they may speak Hindi or a language from the Tibeto-Burman language family, such as Bodish. Their beliefs blend polytheism and animism and they follow the rulings of a council. Many practice cousin marriage.



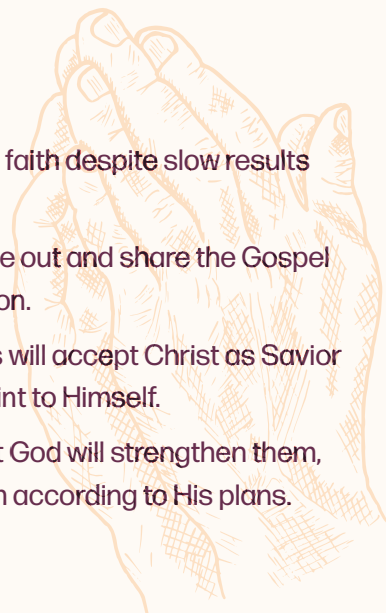
Most Miri people grow their own food and fish, which is also how they make money, although women also weave. Some Miri work as agricultural day laborers, which pays very little. In general, they lack access to education.

Native missionary Bimal* is from the same region as the Miri and is dedicated to reaching them with the Gospel. Since they lack education, his primary outreach method is a school. As the children gain an education and hear the Gospel, they can bless the whole community.

Persecution, such as church burnings, is horrifically common in this part of the world. Despite this, Bimal continues to help the Miri, and also do humanitarian work elsewhere and help orphans. Assisting communities in these ways shows the practical side of Christ's love for all people, even at great risk.

HOW TO PRAY

- Pray for Bimal and his team to stand firm in their faith despite slow results and increasing persecution.
- Pray that Bimal and his team will successfully live out and share the Gospel with the Miri and other people groups in the region.
- Pray for the Miri people, that their ruling councils will accept Christ as Savior and that He will give dreams and visions that point to Himself.
- Pray for persecuted believers in South Asia, that God will strengthen them, use their suffering for His glory, and deliver them according to His plans.



Meet the Uyghurs of Kazakhstan

The Uyghur are an unreached people group who traditionally live in northwest China. As of early 2022, 283,102 Uyghurs lived in Kazakhstan. The majority of them live in the Almaty region (160,801 people) and the city of Almaty (106,253 people). Most modern Uyghurs practice Sunni Islam. Before Islam, the ancestors of the Uyghurs followed other religions such as Tengrism, Manichaeism, and Buddhism.



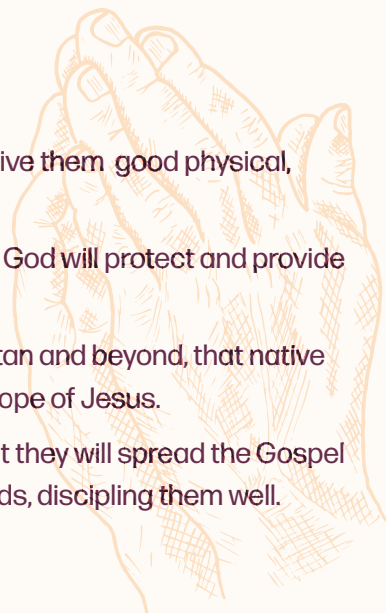
Kulyab* and Albina* are a married Uyghur couple who came to faith in Christ through brother Vasily*, a pastor and evangelist in one of the few evangelical churches in Kazakhstan. They began serving in this church ten years ago and their testimony and preaching have led many more Uyghurs to Christ.

“We are very happy that God touched our hearts and changed our lives,” says sister Albina. “We cannot imagine our lives without Christ and without telling other Uyghurs about Him,” continues Kulyab.

Today, Kulyab and Albina, along with their former pastor Vasily, are among those who carry the Gospel to the Uyghurs in Kazakhstan and Central Asia. Their church is one of the few that consists almost entirely of Uyghurs. Kulyab and Albina lead ministries for adults, youth, and children, and are also responsible for evangelism and discipleship in the church.

HOW TO PRAY

- Pray for Kulyab, Albina, and Vasily, that God will give them good physical, spiritual, mental, and emotional health.
- Pray for missionary families in Central Asia, that God will protect and provide for them.
- Pray for evangelism among Uyghurs in Kazakhstan and beyond, that native missionaries will reach them with the light and hope of Jesus.
- Pray for Central Asian evangelical churches, that they will spread the Gospel among and welcome people from all backgrounds, discipling them well.



Meet the Fulani of Mauritania

The Fulani, also known as the Fuuta Torro, are a tribal group that predominately live in southern Mauritania on the Senegalese border. They live in rural villages and their society incorporates local customs, such as caste and class divisions, and Muslim beliefs, such as multiple wives.



Their belief systems include mysticism and witchcraft, although they practice these beliefs to bring them closer to Allah. Living in rural villages, where they're often isolated, has deeply engrained Islam into every aspect of their lives.

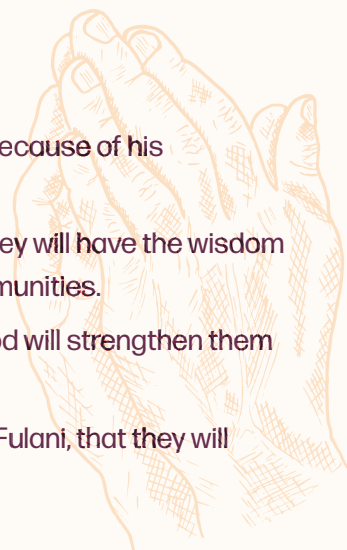
Isolation has also left the Fulani vulnerable to diseases and water pollution. They're also struggling financially due to environmental and economic changes and lack of education.

Maddou* was a leader in his Fulani tribe until he accepted Jesus as Savior then they kicked him out. Despite losing everything, he's shared Jesus with others who've accepted Him. Now, as Muslim-background believers, they're ostracized in their community and some leaders have been imprisoned.

In spite of persecution, the church continues. Maddou leads 13 churches among the Fulani, has survived an assassination attempt, and helps his ostracized community get the food and supplies they need.

HOW TO PRAY

- Pray for Maddou, who's struggling with his health because of his persecution experiences.
- Pray for Maddou and other ministry leaders, that they will have the wisdom to share the Gospel with family members and communities.
- Pray for imprisoned believers in Mauritania, that God will strengthen them and use their suffering for His glory.
- Pray for a Holy Spirit intervention in the lives of the Fulani, that they will accept Christ as Lord.



Meet the Jewish People of Israel

Almost half of the world's Jews live in Israel, totalling roughly seven million people. Even though you may not think of Jews as an unreached people group, most of them don't know that Jesus (Yeshua in Hebrew) was Jewish or that parts of the Bible were originally written in Hebrew.



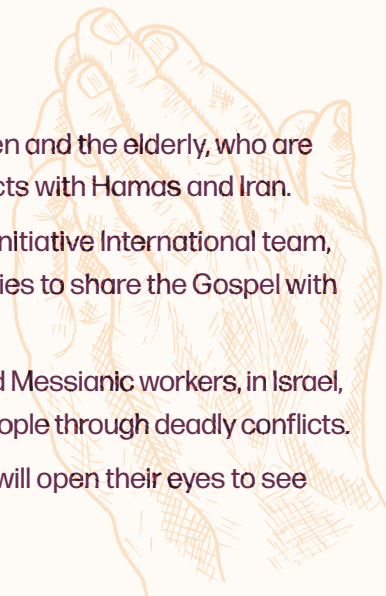
Some Jews actively practice their Jewish faith, while others are ethnically and culturally Jewish with little connection to the faith. Practicing Jews are on a range of devotion, from those who travel and participate in the military to others who refuse military service and do not marry outside of their devout group. Regardless of devotion, almost all Israeli Jews prioritize the rebuilding of the Temple.

Stewart and Chantal Winograd founded and direct Reach Initiative International, which is primarily focused on ministry to Jews in Israel. They describe it as “a ministry of compassion” for survivors of the October 7th attacks, Holocaust survivors, impoverished families, single mothers, orphans, and more.

To show their fellow Jews the Gospel, Stewart, Chantal, and their team provide practical relief and long-term restoration. Practical relief often entails gifting essentials like groceries to families in need and providing emotional care. Long-term restoration continues after the initial crisis or need, helping them rebuild and counseling them. Finally, these programs open Jewish hearts and minds to hear and accept the Gospel.

HOW TO PRAY

- Pray for the vulnerable people, especially children and the elderly, who are being hurt and traumatized in the current conflicts with Hamas and Iran.
- Pray for Stewart, Chantal, and the entire Reach Initiative International team, that they will have the resources and opportunities to share the Gospel with everyone who needs to hear.
- Pray for all of our native missionaries, often called Messianic workers, in Israel, as they continue to share the Gospel and help people through deadly conflicts.
- Pray for the Jewish people worldwide, that God will open their eyes to see Jesus (Yeshua) as the only Messiah.



Meet the Gumuz of Ethiopia

The Gumuz people live in the Benishangul-Gumuz region of northwest Ethiopia on the Sudanese border. They live in remote, bush-savanna areas and hunt, breed cattle, or farm to survive. While they operate in tight clans, they do trade with other people.

The tight clans of Gumuz make evangelism difficult. Since they all believe in animism and Islam, a potential convert would “fracture” the community by believing in Jesus, potentially drawing a punishment from the entire clan. These beliefs, as well as their remote location, leave them with little to no church presence.

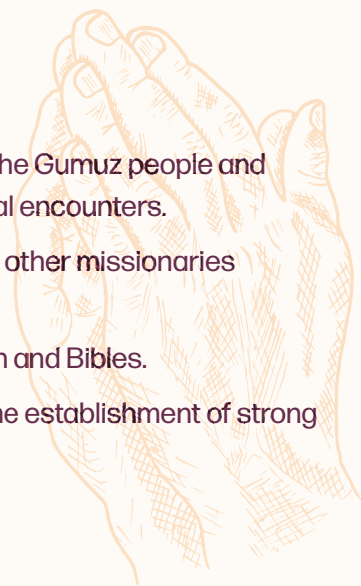


Amsalu, who is from the region, is actively serving among the Gumuz people. He is involved in evangelism, discipleship, and building relationships within the community. Humanitarian aid such as providing food, clean water, education, and healthcare, helps open doors to share the Gospel.

Despite challenges such as isolation and limited resources, Amsalu continues to faithfully share the Gospel and disciple new believers. Through his work and his team, many have come to know the Lord, churches have been planted, and Bibles have been distributed.

HOW TO PRAY

- Pray that the Holy Spirit will soften hearts among the Gumuz people and reveal Christ through dreams, visions, and personal encounters.
- Pray for God’s protection over brother Amsalu and other missionaries serving in remote and sometimes unstable areas.
- Pray for resource provision, such as transportation and Bibles.
- Pray for lasting fruit through discipleship and for the establishment of strong local churches.



Meet the Albanians of Kosovo

While historically Christian, much of Europe has turned away from Christianity to embrace atheism or other belief systems. Islam is one of the fastest growing religions in the region, and has been present in some countries, such as Kosovo, for centuries. The majority of the population is ethnically Albanian and almost 100% of the population is Muslim, both Albanian and Kosovar.



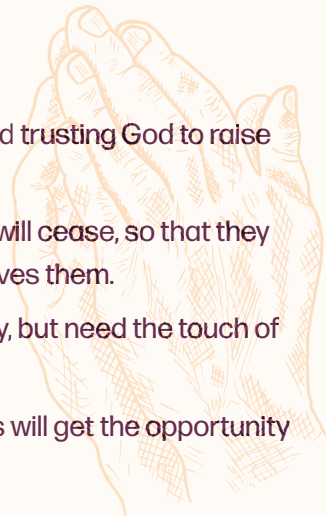
Besim left Islam for Jesus in 1992 and despite being excommunicated by loved ones, saw much of his family accept Jesus. He shares, “Now I am serving as a pastor in a local church in Prizren ‘Bashkësia Ungjillore e Besëlidhjes’. Our vision is to reach Albanian Muslims for Christ.

“Also, by teaching and mentoring two classes of students and providing church-based education, our desire is to raise the next generation of leaders who will continue the work to reach the many Albanian Muslims who have not heard the Good News of Jesus Christ. Many villages and towns have no Gospel presence at all.”

In addition to reaching Albanian Muslims within Kosovo, Besim and the church serve people with special needs and their families. They’ve delivered wheelchairs, hosted “Night to Shine” proms, gifted Bibles, and more.

HOW TO PRAY

- Pray for ministry leaders, for training for new ones and trusting God to raise up more.
- Pray that religious hatred, especially within Muslims, will cease, so that they can see beyond ethno-religious lines to Jesus who loves them.
- Pray for younger generations who admire Christianity, but need the touch of God’s spirit to see Jesus as their Lord and Savior.
- Pray that the people who’ve never heard about Jesus will get the opportunity to hear about and accept Him.



Meet the Embera of Colombia

The Embera tribe is one of the remote tribes living in Chocó, a department of Colombia that borders the Pacific Ocean and Panamanian border.

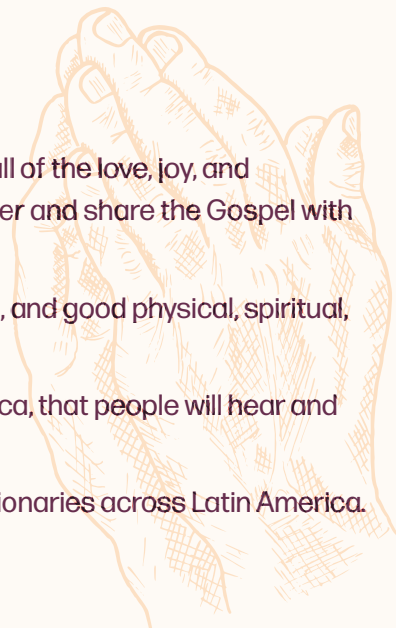
Statistically, the Embera are “reached” with the Gospel. However, native missionaries in Colombia consider them unreached because there are so many remote Embera communities that have not heard the Gospel yet. They live in the rainforests, where they farm, gather, hunt, and fish for food. In some places, they provide tours and guides, give cultural performances, and sell handmade crafts for additional income. The predominant religions are still ethnic beliefs, such as in spirits, and Roman Catholicism.



Heriberto* is a native Embera, and one of the first Christians in this ethnic group. He’s a husband and father of four (including twins), whose wife is currently struggling with post-partum depression and whose eldest son is struggling with demonic dreams. Despite these family mental and spiritual struggles, Heriberto has founded several churches for his ethnic group.

HOW TO PRAY

- Pray for revival, that Embera believers will be full of the love, joy, and patience of Christ as they encourage each other and share the Gospel with non-believers.
- Pray for Heriberto’s family, for financial support, and good physical, spiritual, mental, and emotional health.
- Pray for Gospel evangelism across Latin America, that people will hear and accept Jesus as Savior.
- Pray that God will provide for the needs of missionaries across Latin America.



Who is Advancing Native Missions?

We're glad you asked!

Advancing Native Missions (ANM) exists to take the Gospel to every nation, which means every people group. We do that by encouraging, advocating for, and equipping native missionaries around the world, like the nine you just met.

Everything we do, from planting churches to digging wells, is to introduce the lost, unreached, hurting, and forgotten to the eternal hope and love of Jesus Christ.

Thank you for joining us in prayer with this prayer guide. You can learn more and become a financial partner at advancingnativemissions.com.

