



Day

11

Sept. 23, 2007

The Uyghurs of Xinjiang



We featured the Uyghurs two years ago in “30 Days,” but we want you to pray with a different focus this year. The Uyghurs are a Turkic people group living in ancient oasis cities ringing the Taklamakan Desert of what is now Xinjiang, China. A population of 10 million is spread throughout an area larger than the state of Alaska, with only an estimated 150 followers of Jesus.

Migration, trade and war over the centuries have spread Uyghurs throughout Central Asia, but Xinjiang is their heartland. Uyghurs were previously Buddhist, but Islam entered around the 11th century and has been firmly entrenched ever since. Mystical folk practices are widespread and many people are more concerned with the impact of “jinn” (evil spirits) on their lives than they are with the God of Abraham (Ibrahim).

The Uyghurs have a long and proud history of literature and the arts, especially music, and a clear sense of their cultural identity. However, despite periods of independence, they have been firmly under Chinese control—political,

economic and social—for the past century, and strongly resent it.

A key staging post on the ancient Silk Road, the city of Kashgar is arguably the cultural and religious centre of Uyghur culture. It is known for being a hotbed for conservative Islam and Uyghur nationalist and separatist sentiment. Kashgar boasts one of the largest weekly bazaars in Central Asia with tens of thousands of people—almost entirely Muslims—coming to trade from the surrounding countryside and even from neighboring Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

Islam explained

Qiblah (qibla) - This is the direction of Mecca which one faces in Islamic prayer. The qibla is always indicated in mosques.

PRAYER REQUESTS

- ▶ *Pray that God will break down the ancient strongholds of fear and death and will release the Uyghur people into the freedom only Christ can bring.*
- ▶ *Pray for the completion of the Uyghur scriptures. The New Testament translation has recently been completed, but much of the Old Testament is yet to be done. The Uyghur Bible is illegal in Xinjiang.*
- ▶ *Pray that God will raise an army of intercessors to stand in the gap for the Uyghur people of Xinjiang.*