

50 Largest UNREACHED People Groups

Transform-World: Christ's Missional Challenge - The Last and the Least



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Han Chinese, Xiang of China



People Name	Han Chinese, Xiang
Country	China
10/40 Window	Yes
Population	35,580,000
World Population	35,684,000
Language	Chinese, Xiang
Religion	Ethnic Religions
Bible	Questionable Need
Online Audio NT	No
Jesus Film	Yes
Audio Recordings	Yes
Christ Followers	Less than 2 %
Status	Unreached
Progress Level	1.2

"Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest."

LOCATION

Approximately 35 million speakers of Xiang Chinese -- or Hunanese -- live in China. The majority are located in Hunan Province. Others inhabit 20 counties of western Sichuan and parts of northern Guangxi and northern Guangdong provinces.

IDENTITY

The Xiang are traditionally acknowledged as the most stubborn and proud of all Chinese peoples. "The people themselves are the most clannish and conservative to be found in the whole empire, and have succeeded in keeping their province practically free from invasion by foreigners and even foreign ideas."

LANGUAGE

Xiang is a distinct Chinese language in transition. It is exposed to Mandarin from several directions. Hunanese women once possessed their own writing system. It was taught by women to women and could not be read by men.

HISTORY

The People's Republic of China (1949-): The Communists seized control of China in 1949. Initial euphoria among the people soon vanished as famine, economic mismanagement, and the suppression of all opposition became the norm. The darkest period came between 1966 and 1976 when millions of innocent people were butchered in the name of progress. After Mao's death in 1976 a power struggle

ensued. Deng Xiaoping, who stood alone with an agenda of economic reforms, took power and China gradually reopened to the outside world. A demonstration held in Tiananmen Square, Beijing, to demand political reform was forcefully broken up by the army on 4 June 1989. Fears that China would revert to the excesses of the 1960s and 1970s proved unfounded, however, and China continued to open up and become a thriving part of the world community throughout the 1990s.

CUSTOMS

In 1911 the Xiang were described as "the best haters and best fighters in China. Long after the rest of the empire was open to missionary activity, Hunan kept its gates firmly closed against the foreigner." The Xiang are renowned for their theaters and opera.

RELIGION

Recently there has been an upsurge in religious interest in Hunan, as people seek to fill the spiritual void in their hearts. "A monastery in Hunan has witnessed tens of thousands of pilgrims arriving to worship the three 'gods' of Communist China - Chairman Mao, Zhou Enlai and Zhu De. This pilgrimage has set alarm bells ringing in the local government over the revival of superstition."

CHRISTIANITY

In 1861 Welsh missionary Griffith John met a Hunan military mandarin, who "boasted of the glory and martial courage of the Hunan men,

and said there was no danger of their ever believing in Jesus or of His religion taking root there." The pride of the Xiang has made them the most unreached of all Han Chinese peoples. Today only 80,000 of the Xiang are Christians. The entire Christian population of Hunan is numbered at no more than 120,000. Because of internal strife, the Hunan church has been described as a "disaster area."