

FRIEND OF FORGOTTEN PEOPLES

by Jerry Falley – November 2003

Have you ever been forgotten, left behind, or lost? Can you think of an occasion when you were unintentionally neglected or omitted? Is there a time when you felt the pain of being erased from one's memory like a name being wiped off a chalkboard? It is a heartbreaking experience to be forgotten, for one never to be remembered.

There are hundreds, thousands, even millions of people who today live out their lives within a particular language or cultural group. Jesus has provided redemption for each of them and they wait for a messenger to bring the good news. But believers fail to think about them, to recognize their spiritual condition and do something about it. Forgotten Peoples need a friend!

A friend is a gem of great value; one who likes you, believes in you and is willing to always give you a helping hand. Solomon said in Proverbs 17:17, "*A friend loves at all times*" and in Ecclesiastes 4:10, "*If one falls down, his friend can help him up.*"

Job adds another bit of wisdom to the definition of friend, "***My intercessor is my friend...on behalf of a man he pleads with God as a man pleads for his friend***" (Job 16:20-21). Job sees an intercessor and a friend as being "one and the same." A friend will beg and plead with God for your good. How do you know that a person is truly your friend? If he prays, asks, and intercedes before God in your behalf.

Are there Forgotten Peoples in your country? For example, in the Horn of Africa we find the following tribes (language and cultural groups):

AFAR		BEJA		RASHAIDA	
Country	Population	Country	Population	Country	Population
D'jibouti	200,000	Eritrea	160,000	Eritrea	34,000
Eritrea	260,000	Sudan	1,907,000	Sudan	10,000
Ethiopia	1,020,000				
1% Christian		Fewer than 10 born-again believers		Fewer than 10 born-again believers	

The Afar, Beja and Rashaida are Forgotten Peoples! They are lost, without a Savior and rushing toward a Christless eternity. They need a friend, an intercessor! They need a friend who will intercede for their salvation, who will plead with God for a messenger to preach the gospel to them.

Jesus is the Friend of Forgotten Peoples for the Bible says, "*Christ Jesus...is also interceding for us*" (Romans 8:34) and "*He always lives to intercede for them*" (Hebrews 7:25). Will you be their friend, too? Will you go to the library, check the card catalog and find a book giving a listing of the various language/cultural groups in your country, and observe their religious preference? Will you put forth the effort to ask your leadership how many Assemblies of God churches have been planted among them? The individuals in these language/cultural groups are just like you – a father, a wife, a child, a young person. **Do you care enough to be their friend? Will you be their intercessor?**

* Statistics: Joshua Project 2000/ Field research