

2014—Bezhta People

“The first book ever published in our language!” The Bezhta man was celebrating the historic breakthrough which took place for his people in 1999. This breakthrough is even highlighted regarding the Bezhta in the definitive secular linguistic work by Koryakov, *The Register of Caucasus Languages*—“The first book in the Bezhta language was published in 1999, using the Cyrillic script.”

What is doubly remarkable is that “this first book” was the Gospel of Luke from the New Testament. How did this amazing gift of grace happen among this staunch Muslim people? Magomed*, the trailblazer of the Bezhta Gospel of Luke, must be ‘a man of peace’ as described by Jesus in Luke 10. Sometime in the early 1990’s Magomed was exposed to Jesus and the Gospels and decided to make it his project to get the Gospel of Luke into a published form in his Bezhta language. This was not only a translation process. He also needed to create the first written Bezhta alphabet! To do this, Magomed worked from the Cyrillic script used by Russian and the nearby Avar language and then added additional letter symbols to cover Bezhta sounds which are in neither Avar or Russian. For thousands of years the Bezhta language had been only an oral language. [*--Name Changed]

The Bezhta are a mountain people located in the extreme southwest corner of the Russian province of Dagestan, near the border with Georgia. As a matter of fact, at least 1000 Bezhta live across the border in two Georgian mountain villages—Chatliskure and Saruso. In these Georgian villages they still speak the Bezhta language. Back in the home region of Dagestan reside at least 9000 Bezhta, primarily in three villages—Tlyadal, Khosharkhota, and the central large village named Bezhta. Bezhta speakers also live in several enclaves in the northern lowlands of Dagestan.

“So shall My Word be that goes forth out of My mouth; it shall not return unto Me void, without accomplishing that which I please and prospering in the thing for which I sent it”(Isa.55:11). Who will pray persistently (Luke 18:1-8) for this clear promise of Isaiah 55 to be fulfilled among the Bezhta, based on the Gospel of Luke already among them? Who will pray that Holy Spirit-empowered disciples of Jesus will be sent to enlarge this bridge with this Bezhta ‘man of peace’—just as Jesus sent His disciples out with His gospel in Luke 10? Who will go? (Rom. 10:13-15; 15:20-21)

PRAY for representatives of Jesus’ love to come who are linguistically gifted and ready to serve the Bezhta people with “language respect.” PRAY for these servants to honor the Bezhta language and help preserve it. This will touch the hearts of Bezhta people. PRAY for these friends to team up with linguistically-gifted Magomed, and ultimately bring more of Jesus’ words of grace into the Bezhta language. PRAY for the grace of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit to break through into open hearts among the Bezhta and spread from clan to clan and village to village(II Chron.16:9). Summer 2014—Huge News!!—First 2 Bezhta have come to Jesus!—in northern Dagestan. PRAY for courage & Fruit of the Spirit thru Aslan & Zina[not real names]. PRAY for many to be reached thru them!! Isa.60:1-3*

NAMES OF BEZHTA VILLAGES

In Primary Bezhta Region:

1. Khosharkhota
2. Tlyadal
3. Bezhta -- [accent on last syllable]

In Georgia:

1. Chatliskure
2. Saruso

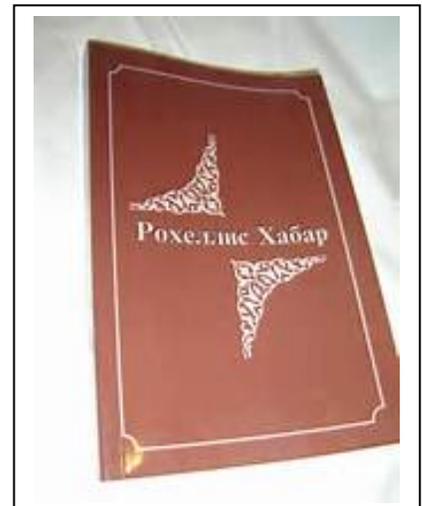
In Northern Dagestan:

1. Kachalai
2. Kara-usek



View of Village
of **BEZHTA**

-in southwestern
mountains of
Dagestan



Gospel of Luke in Bezhta