

Antioch Christian Fellowship

The Kazakh People of Kazakhstan

Unreached Peoples Prayer Profile for May & June



The Kazak, a Turkic people, are the second largest Muslim group of Central Asia. In the past, they were perhaps the most influential of the various Central Asian ethnic groups. While most of the Kazak now live in [Kazakhstan](#), they make up only about 40% of the country's population. Large communities can also be found in [Mongolia](#), [Ukraine](#), and [Russia](#).

The Kazak developed a distinct ethnic identity in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Several of their clans formed a federation that would influence began to take on an ethnic character. During the nineteenth century, the Russians acquired Central Asia through a steady process of annexation. They eventually claimed the entire territory of Kazakhstan. Tragically, about half of the Kazak population was killed during the Russian Civil War of the 1920's and 1930's. During this time, many fled to China and Mongolia.

What are their lives like?

Since the collapse of Soviet communism, the Kazak have been searching for their identity. Traditionally, they were nomadic shepherds; however, under Soviet rule, much of their land was seized and used for collective farming. As industry developed, their economy and culture became dependent entirely on the Russians. Today, however, there is a widespread movement to re-develop their own cultural identity.

As nomadic shepherds, the Kazak lived in dome shaped felt tents called *yurts*. Under Russian rule, many were forced to move to the cities and live in houses or small apartments. Most of these two or three room apartments have running water, though in some rural areas they have no hot water. The water is clean, but not safe to drink. The Kazak eat a variety of meat and dairy products. Rice and bread are common staples. In the southern regions of Kazakhstan, fruit and vegetables grow in abundance. There the people enjoy eating grapes, melons, and tomatoes.

Western style dress is common among the Kazak men and women living in the cities. However, the rural Kazak workers generally wear loose, colorless shirts with baggy trousers that are tied at the waist. This outfit is similar to the Kazak native costume of the past.

The structure of the Kazak family is patriarchal, or male-dominated, but this is gradually changing. Legal authority that once belonged to the male head of the household has now been shifted to the head of the collective farm. These changes have caused a breakdown in the traditional Kazak family.

What are their beliefs?

The Kazak embraced [Islam](#) during the sixteenth century and still consider themselves Muslim today. Changes in Kazak society (mainly from a nomadic to a settled lifestyle) and an attempt by the Soviets to suppress religious freedoms have led the people to adopt Islam more closely. However, their Islamic practices have been combined with traditional folk religions.

Traditional Kazak folk religion included beliefs in spirits. They practiced animism and ancestor worship. ("Animism" is the belief that non-human objects have spirits. "Ancestor worship" involves praying and offering sacrifices to deceased ancestors.) Today, the Kazak continue to consult shamans (priests who cure the sick by magic, communicate with the spirits, and control events). They also practice various traditional rituals before and after marriage, at birth, and at death.

What are their needs?

The Kazak are facing ecological catastrophe due to the mismanagement of natural resources. This has caused the near desolation of the Aral Sea and contamination of much of their drinking water. As a result, the infant mortality rate is very high. There is also a high rate of still births and birth defects.

Although three missions agencies are currently targeting the Kazak, the response has been small. Among the nearly 7 million Kazak in Kazakstan, there are less than 700 known believers.

Prayer Points

- Ask the Lord to send long term laborers to live among the Kazak and share the love of Christ with them.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to open the hearts of the Kazak towards Christians so that they will be receptive to the Gospel.
- Pray that God will raise up prayer teams to go and break up the soil through worship and intercession.
- Ask God to encourage and protect the small number of Muslim Kazak who have converted to Christianity.
- Pray that these converts will begin to boldly share the Gospel with their own people.
- Pray that God will reveal Himself to the Kazak through dreams and visions.
- Ask the Lord to raise up strong local churches among the Kazak by the year 2000.

Kazakh People Group Information:

Country:	Kazakhstan
Language Spoken:	Kazakh
Population of People in this Country:	8,100,000
Population of Language Speakers in the World:	8,119,800
Language Code:	KAZ00
% Christians of this People in this Country:	0%
# of Evangelicals of this People in this Country:	5,000
% Evangelicals of this People in this Country:	0%
Latitude, Longitude:	51.7817, 70.6804
GMI Map Code:	KAZ-KAZ-EPY
Affinity Block Name:	Turkic Peoples
People Cluster:	Kazakh
Race Code:	MSY41e
1995 Beginning Joshua Project List:	Yes
Active Original Joshua Project List:	Yes

Additional People Group Information:

Complete Bible:	1821
New Testament:	2002
Bible Portions:	1818
Jesus Film:	Yes
Christian Radio Broadcast:	FEBC, TWR, Intl Russian Radio
Audio Recording of Gospel:	Yes