

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations" **Matthew 28:19**



Unreached People Prayer Profile March & April, 2004

The Tajik People of Kazakhstan

The five million Tajik are one of the major people groups of Central Asia. While the majority (over three million) live in [Tajikistan](#), there are significant communities in most of the other Central Asian republics, including neighboring [Uzbekistan](#), [Kazakhstan](#), [Turkmenistan](#), and [Kyrgyzstan](#). Today, there are more than 26,000 Tajik living in Kazakhstan.

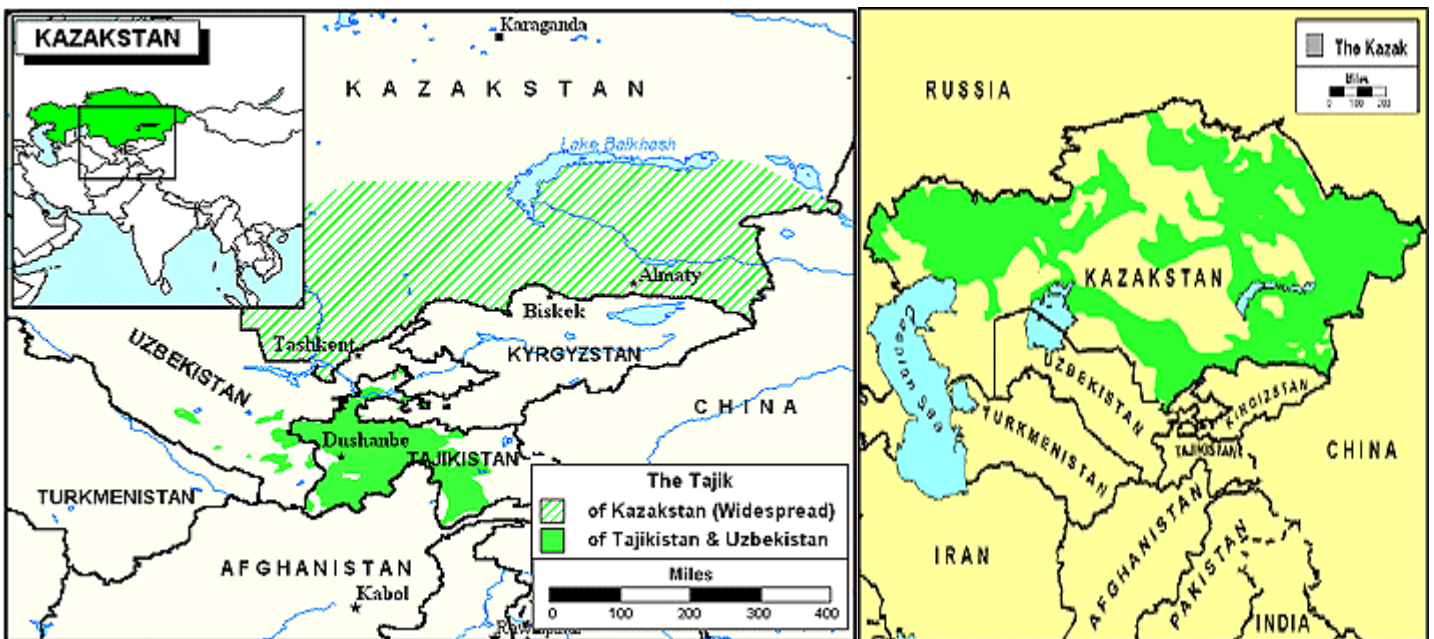
The Tajik have repeatedly been invaded and conquered throughout their history. The armies of Alexander the Great, the Arabs in the seventh century, Genghis Khan, the Turks, the British, and the Russian empire have all had a profound impact on these people. In fact, the numerous invasions have been the major factor in the dispersion of the Tajik to other locations.

The term "Tajik" comes from the word *taj*, which means "crown." This name was probably first used by the seventh century Arabs to differentiate the Persian (Tajiki) speakers from the Turkic speakers.



What Are Their Lives Like?

Most of the Tajik are mountain farmers and shepherds. Seasonal grasses create suitable pastures for raising sheep, goats, cattle, a few camels, and some horses. They also practice a remarkable system of terraced, mountainside irrigation so that wheat and barley can be grown at the higher, dry altitudes. More and more of the Tajik have moved to the cities over the past fifty years. Most families farm during the summer period, then return to the cities for the remainder of the year. This has resulted in an unstable work force throughout the region.



A majority of the urban Tajik live in governmental housing. The rural Tajik live instead in village communities located on non-farmable, rocky land. There they build low, square or rectangular houses out of unbaked mud. Pressed mud bricks made with stone are used for the foundations. Flat roofs are made of tightly packed earth and twigs, and are supported by mat covered beams.

Women wear colorful national costumes with printed cottons and silks accented by flowered head scarves. They rarely wear veils; however, they do wear *chaddors*, which are multi-purpose shawls. The men wear shirts and trousers, sometimes with quilted robes and belts. They also wear embroidered skull caps, and some wear turbans or fur hats during the cold mountain winters. The upper class and city dwellers tend to wear European style clothing.

Green tea is served with most meals. Bread is a staple food, and the Tajik bake bread out of anything that can be ground into flour, including a variety of peas and mulberries. They also eat starchy foods, rice, grapes, dried fruits, chicken, lamb, and vegetable dishes. Tajik society is patriarchal, meaning that the authority belongs to the oldest males of the extended family. Inheritances are passed down through the males, and after marriage, a new bride moves in with the husband's family. Traditionally, marriages were arranged by the family. Today, however, most Tajik are free to choose their own mates. Villages and communities are ruled by a *majlis*, or council, made up of the male leaders of prominent families. A chief is elected from among the council. The "kinship structure" is still dominant in social and political spheres of life. The Tajik live in tight-knit communities and are a very hospitable people.

What Are Their Beliefs?

Most Tajik are [Sunni Muslims](#) of the Hanafite branch, although some Shi'ites exist. Approximately ten percent of the Tajik are classified as non-religious. This has probably been a result of Russian atheistic pressure.

What Are Their Needs?

Various evangelistic resource materials, such as the Jesus film and the Bible, are already available in the Tajiki language. However, the people have remained closed to the Gospel. One missions agency is currently targeting the Tajik of Kazakhstan, but their progress has been slow. Although there are a few hundred Tajik believers in Tajikistan, there are no known Tajik Christians in Kazakhstan.

Prayer Points

- Ask God to grant wisdom and favor to the missions agency that is currently targeting the Tajik of Kazakhstan.
- Pray for the effectiveness of the Jesus film among the Tajik.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to anoint the Gospel as it goes forth via television and radio in the Tajiki language.
- Pray that God will open the hearts of Kazakhstan's governmental leaders to the Gospel.
- Take authority over the spiritual principalities and powers that are keeping the Tajik bound.
- Pray that God will call out prayer teams who will begin breaking up the soil through intercession.
- Ask the Lord to raise up strong local churches among the Tajik.

Statistics (Latest estimates from the World Evangelization Research Center.)

THE PEOPLE

THE PEOPLE

- **People name:** Tajik
- **Country:** Kazakhstan
- **Their language:** Tajiki
- **Population:**
 - (1990) 25,800
 - (1995) 26,500
 - (2000) 27,400
- **Largest religion:**
 - Muslim (Hanafite) 80%
 - Muslim (Shia) 10%
 - Nonreligious 10%
- **Christians:** 0%
- **Church members:** 0
- **Scriptures in their own language:** Bible
- **Jesus Film in their own language:** Available
- **Christian broadcasts in their own language:** Available
- **Mission agencies working among this people:** 1
- **Persons who have heard the Gospel:** 8,200 (31%)
 - Those evangelized by local Christians: 0 (0%)
 - Those evangelized from the outside: 8,200 (31%)
- **Persons who have never heard the Gospel:** 18,300 (69%)

THE COUNTRY

- **Country:** Kazakhstan
- **Population:**
 - (1990) 16,669,700
 - (1995) 17,111,100
 - (2000) 17,694,000
- **Major peoples in size order:**
 - Kazak 39.7%
 - Russian 37.8%
 - Ukrainian 5.4%
 - German 5.2%
 - Uzbek 2%
- **Major religions:**
 - Muslim 45.4%
 - Christian 24.4%
 - Nonreligious 18.4%
- **Number of denominations:** 23
- **Additional People Group Information:**

Complete Bible:	Yes
New Testament:	Yes
Bible Portions:	1981
Jesus Film:	Yes
Christian Radio Broadcast:	FEBA
Audio Recording of Gospel:	Yes

