

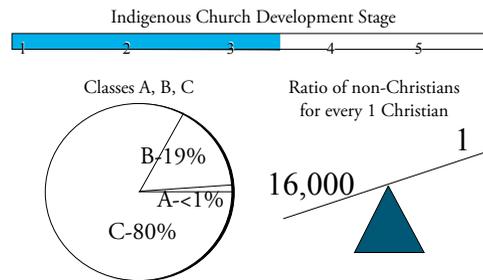
Uzbek



Quick Facts

Population: 24,000,000
 Uzbekistan: 18,500,000
 Afghanistan: 1,800,000
 Tajikistan: 1,500,000
 Pakistan: 650,000

Religion: Sunni Islam
Believers: 0.006%
Scriptures: NT
Ministry Tools: JRGT
Church Status: 3
Mission Status: 2
MS Subgroups: 14



Class A- Are members of a Culturally Relevant Church
 Class B- Have close access to a CRC, but have not yet joined
 Class C- Have no reasonable or close access to a CRC

Identity: The Uzbek are the second largest Turkish nationality. They are the descendants of at least a dozen Turkic-Mongolian tribes which displaced and assimilated the Iranian peoples in modern day Uzbekistan following the 13th century Mongol invasion. Under the reign of Tamerlane, Uzbekistan became the seat of power in one of the world's greatest empires. The name Uzbek means Lord of Oneself.

Lifestyle: The vast majority of Uzbeks live in rural areas. Under the Soviets, the Uzbeks were gathered into agri-communes, and Uzbekistan became one of the world's leading producers of cotton. In Afghanistan, the Uzbek make their living as pastoralists, as well as middlemen in the opium trade which flows through Uzbekistan and on into Russia and Europe.

Customs: Dating back to their history of military conquest, the Uzbeks play a game called *Ulaq*, which involved two

teams on horseback vying for control of a released prisoner, who is then brutally subdued and thrust into the other team's goal. Today, the game is played with a goat or young calf. Whatever the case, the victim is eventually dismembered during the course of play.

Religion: The Uzbeks were first introduced to Islam during the 8th Arab conquest of the area. However it was not until the 14th century under Tamerlane and his successors that Islam came to dominate the lives of the Uzbeks as a state religion. Under the Soviets, Islam was suppressed and Sharia law banned. Urban areas became largely secularized and a new generation of anti-religious Uzbek politicians came to power which still control Uzbekistan today.

Christian Outreach: Evangelizing Muslims is illegal in Uzbekistan and Uzbek Christians have been severely persecuted. Almost all existing churches are in urban areas and are mixed in ethnicity,

complicating the growth of a truly indigenous Uzbek discipleship movement. Dozens of small Uzbek fellowships have been established in Tashkent, though the government refuses to allow them to register as churches.

How to Pray:

Uzbek society has attached a stigma to Christianity as a Western imperial religion. The result is that most Uzbek Christians are not attending churches established by foreign missionaries. Pray for these isolated believers that God would strengthen their faith and bring them together in contextualized fellowships.

The New Testament was completed in 1995 but is in need of serious revision before it can be widely used. Pray for this to happen and for the completion of the Old Testament as well.

Pray for hundreds of Uzbek church planters to be trained in the next decade and thrust out into the rural areas of Uzbekistan and Afghanistan.

The penalty for evangelism is 3 years in prison. Pray for wisdom, creativity and boldness to stand firm amidst such restrictions.

Every year 220,000 Uzbeks die without Christ.