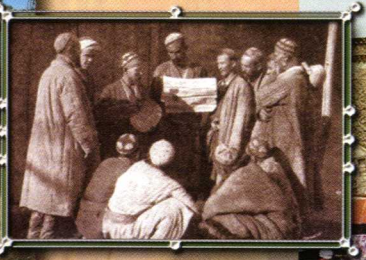


The 35/45

# Turkic Window

A Gateway to the Muslim World



  
AD2000  
AND BEYOND

JESHUA  
PROJECT  
2000



## A Letter from Luis Bush

It was a night to remember—a night that changed my life. On that night I saw with my own eyes how the Lord himself has flung open a gateway to the most unreachable: a gateway to Muslims!

I saw it that night as I walked through the crowded Millet Muslim ghetto in the heart of Plovdiv, Bulgaria. Men and women of faith openly shared the Gospel, as the disciples must have done almost two thousand years ago. Words cannot express how my heart and soul were stirred. Never before have I seen such an open door to Muslim people.

That gateway is what we are now calling "The 35/45 Turkic Window."

As we stood near the western edge of the Turkic Window that first night of our journey, I thought back to the day, five years earlier, when a worker among the Turkic peoples came to share his burden with me. "There is another window atop the 10/40 Window\*," he said. "It's the Turkic Window, which is framed by the 35 degree and 45 degree north latitudes. It extends from Skopje, Macedonia in the west, all the way to Urumchi, China in the east. Come and see it for yourself, and write a booklet to encourage God's people to become involved."

And so we journeyed across the vast region, following the ancient Great Silk Road. We were astounded by the vastness of the gateway the Lord has opened, and compelled by the challenge He has laid at the feet of believers worldwide. Here is the opportunity for which we have prayed for generations, an opening in the seemingly impenetrable wall of Islam.

Now, with the sweeping political changes that have taken place since the crumbling of the Soviet Union, a gateway of opportunity has opened to reach these ancient peoples. This land is in the midst of dramatic change. It is **volatile**. Massive unemployment grips the people as communism moves out and market economies move in. There is a **vacuum**. Fledgling governments restructure everything from constitutions to education. This land is **viable**. Not for a thousand years has there been so much freedom to share the Gospel with the people who live in the 35/45 Turkic Window.

Near the end of our journey, we were amazed to find 5,000 believers and seekers from many people groups gathered in a stadium in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. We worshipped near China's remote western frontier with enthusiastic believers preparing for the largest gathering of Uyghur adult Christians anyone could remember: more than 200. In the midst of massive unemployment and great need we saw the unfolding of the reality of God at work: among the new nations of Central Asia...among the Turkic people...among Muslims.

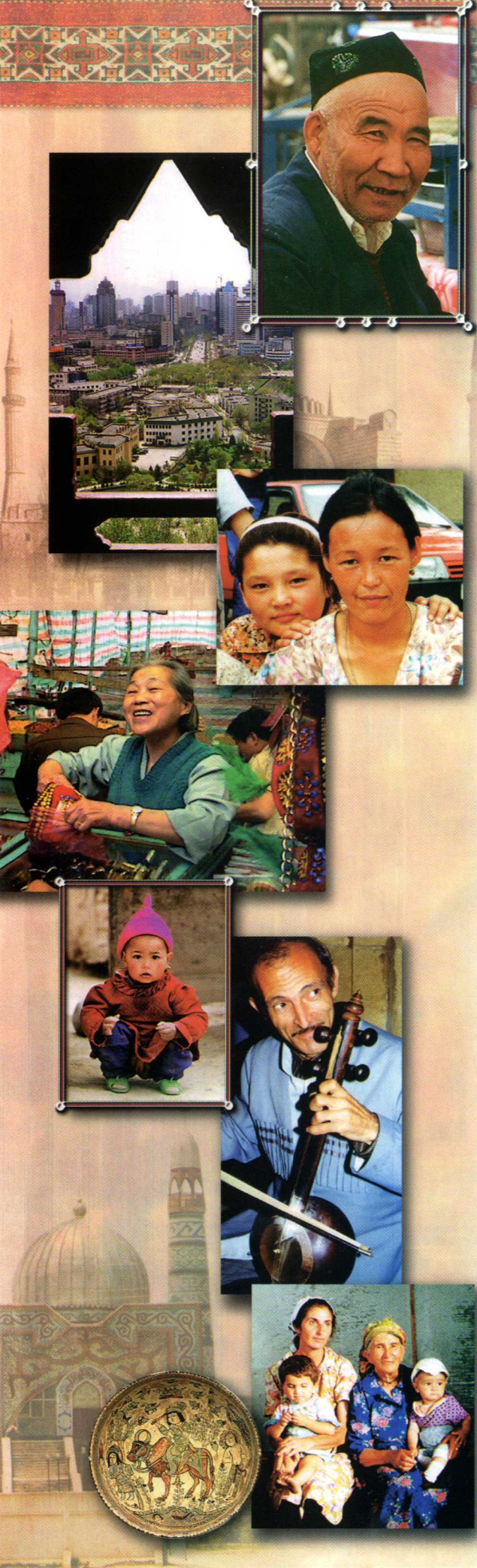
But this freedom to share the Gospel may not last. The very factors that helped open the gateway may close it. Nationalistic fervor mixed with religious fundamentalism could close the door to a Christianity branded as a foreign faith. It happened before. In a museum near Tokmok, close to the Kyrgyzstan border with China, we were reminded that a million people along the Silk Road came to Christ during the Nestorian advance. Not since the 14th century has there been such an opportunity to share the Gospel. Jesus said: "As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work" (John 9:4).



Luis Bush

International Director, AD2000 & Beyond Movement

\* The 10/40 Window is the region between 10 and 40 degrees north latitude, extending from the Atlantic to the Pacific Oceans. It encompasses over three and one-half billion people, including most of the world's Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists. The 35/45 Turkic Window extends that region to include the people of the Turkic World.





# Why I Should Move into the 35/45 Turkic Window

*"If - if - one of the many ifs - if the church of Christ had only been about its business, even 50 years ago, when one pioneer had already pointed out this very area as suitable for immediate evangelization - there might have been silence enough in which to hear the command of God so responsive to new ideas, so filled with the spirit of adventure. She might have become a church on fire for Christ in the east." -1933, Mildred Cable*

Six decades later, the Soviet Union collapsed and a few Christian workers quietly moved into the newly forming Turkic Republics. They met to determine felt needs, talking with church leaders, prime ministers, and citizens who wondered what "Free Market" meant.

What has happened in this decade could be one of the major stories of our time. Perhaps no region of the world has experienced such an amazing rate of church growth in the last ten years as the 35/45 Turkic Window. God is moving mightily there in this crucial hour. It is time for Christians everywhere to move into the 35/45 Turkic Window. Here's why:

## 1. Massive movements of people are changing the complexion of the region

Central Asia has a long history of huge population movements. Alexander the Great, Genghis Khan and Tamerlane swept across the region's deserts and mountains in search of conquests. About one hundred years ago, the people began to fear domination by China, so they invited the Russians in. By 1917 some two million Russians had flooded the region, and Central Asia was carved into the Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Tajik, Turkmen and Uzbek Soviet republics.

After the break-up of the Soviet Union, tensions grew between the former colonizers and the newly freed colonies. Between 1989 and 1998, the number of Russians plummeted throughout Central Asia. Hundreds of thousands of Germans left at the same time. Many Russian and German believers who stayed behind became evangelists to their Turkic neighbors. Some of the first Turkic believers came to Christ through the witness of a Russian Baptist or Pentecostal.

In recent years there has been a massive movement within these republics from the rural areas to the cities. In Azerbaijan, for example, more than a million Azerbaijani refugees, displaced by the war with Armenia, have flooded into the capital, Baku, seeking work.

Many other countries along the 35/45 Turkic Window are experiencing similar people movements, political transition,

## The 35/45 Turkic Window

The Silk Road - the great highway that shaped history - draws a band across the heart of the modern Turkic World. Almost 90 percent of the world's more than 145 million Turkic speakers live along the Silk Road, between the 35th and 45th parallels. Although the bulk of Tatars live outside the 35/45 Window, Tatars are no less important or influential throughout the Turkic World. Turkic speakers are a majority in countries stretching from Turkey through Central Asia to northwestern China. They share four great things in common: 1. A common homeland: The Silk Road, 2. A common culture: Turkic, 3. A common heritage: The boiling cauldron of Central Asia, and 4. A common vision: The 35/45 Turkic Window for Christ.

The land now known as Central Asia, at the heart of the Silk Road, was once called Turkestan. Marco Polo, the first European to travel the length of the Silk Road, called it the Province of Greater Turkey. When Russia and China split Central Asia in two, the western half became Russian Turkestan, and the eastern part Chinese Turkestan. Until recently, most of the Turkic peoples living between Turkey and eastern Turkestan called themselves Turkestanis or Turkis. These are the peoples calling out to us through the 35/45 Turkic Window.

The Turkic World, however, is not a unified political bloc. Many Turkic peoples of the Silk Road do not accept a common Turkic identity as a political agenda. In the wake of the Cold War, Islam manipulates Turkic affinities of language and culture as a unifying political and social force. While recognizing the Turkic cultural affinity, Christians should also be sensitive to ethnic identities. Azerbaijanis and Turks are different from each other, and Uzbeks and Uyghurs are distinct, despite their similarities. Greater than the need for a national identity, however, is the common spiritual need for salvation. Today, God is working in a fresh and powerful way among all the Turkic peoples of the 35/45 Turkic Window.

When we focus prayer and partnerships on the 35/45 Turkic Window, we are asking God to impact all the Turkic and non-Turkic peoples who live along the old Silk Road. Also, we are asking God's people worldwide to pray and participate with the Holy Spirit's call to go into the 35/45 Turkic Window. As you read about the challenges of the 35/45 Turkic Window, ask God three questions: How can I pray? Where can I go? What can I do?



## A common homeland: The Silk Road

For more than a thousand years, the Silk Road served as a conduit for conversation as well as for commerce and conquest. This great information superhighway of the ancient world linked Europe with Asia. The network of roads we call the Silk Road stretched more than 10,000 kilometers over some of the world's highest mountains, most desolate deserts, and endless steppes. The length and breadth of the Silk Road created a new world-view that was greater than the sum of its parts.

*continued on page 5-right*



## The Millet People of Bulgaria

Bulgaria, home to one million Muslim Turkish speakers, is experiencing a people's movement to Christ, which began in the late 1980s with no outside input, or planning. The Millet people of Bulgaria are rejected by the majority people of the country, looked down on by the purer ethnic Turks, and disdained even by the Gypsies. In recent years, however, the Millets have found acceptance in Jesus Christ.

In initial contacts, the Millet refer to themselves as Turks, but with time it becomes clear that they perceive themselves as distinct from both pure Turks and from Gypsies. Yet, the half-million Millet, who live almost entirely in eastern Bulgaria, are the fruit of intermarriage between those two groups. Darker in skin color and with a more limited vocabulary and simpler grammar, they live in the slum areas. God is working mightily among them, performing miracles and drawing some 15,000 Bulgarian Millet Turkish speakers to Himself, almost entirely in the last ten years.

At least a hundred purely indigenous "no-name-brand" Christian fellowships have sprung up among the Millet people. Many stories of miracles and healing have accompanied this spontaneous movement.

A woman from the town of Plovdiv, tells a typical story. She says that two people in her neighborhood talked to her and her husband about "Isa Masiach," the Lord Jesus Christ over a period of time. Then their youngest son was seriously injured, and his sight was threatened. When they came home from the hospital that day, they knelt and cried out to God to heal their child. They went back to the hospital every hour and asked their son: "How is it?" Each time he said, "It's a little better." Then, when the bandages were taken off his eyes, they asked: "How far can you see?" "Three meters," he replied...then "five meters"...until he could see again. They realized that this was a great miracle, and the whole family gave their hearts to the Lord.

and even cultural change. Ethnic aspirations run high as indigenous people write their new constitutions, establish their educational programs and find their way culturally. The resulting spiritual openness has been called the "dislocation principle" of church growth: as people experience profound change throughout their lives, they become more open to the good news of God's love. This is the time of opportunity for Christian evangelism in the Turkic World.

## 2. Extraordinary church growth in the last decade

The Turkic church grew at an astounding rate of more than 43 percent per year during the decade of the nineties. There are in excess of 43,000 reported Turkic active believers in some 374 fellowships. This figure today compares with about 1,661 less than ten years ago.

Never before in history has there been so much response among Turkic peoples (see chart, page 11). One of the most dramatic advances of the Gospel in the last decade may well be among the twenty million or so Azerbaijanis living in Iran. A reliable source confidently estimated that about one quarter of all Iranian churches, both in Iran and outside, are people from an Azerbaijani background.

There has been a notable response to the presentation of the Gospel, even in a country with one of the lowest average annual church growth rates. Just one ministry in that country reports that the number of people coming to Christ out of Islam more than doubled from 650 in 1990 to 1,500 in 1998. In that same country the number of New Testaments sold or given out in 1997 exceeded that of the previous ten years combined. Eleven years ago only two Christian fellowships met regularly in Istanbul; today 12 meet in their own premises, another four meet in houses, and still more are being planned.

Especially rapid growth has occurred among the Turkish-speaking Millets of Bulgaria (see sidebar, left), among the Kazakhs and among

# The 35/45 Turkic Window



Turkic Peoples in The 35/45 Turkic Window

- Turkish
- Gagauz
- Turkmen
- Kazakh (Kazak)
- Azerbaijani
- Tatar
- Kyrgyz (Kirghiz)

Notes: Town and people locations are approximate. People's markings indicate significantly large Turkic populations and do not necessarily represent all Turkic peoples.



the Gagauz in Moldova.

The 250,000-strong Gagauz Turkic tribe migrated out of northwestern China in the Middle Ages. They settled along the western shores of the Black Sea, where they converted to Eastern Orthodoxy. The last decade has been years of the "favor of the Lord" for the Gagauz Turks. Nominally Orthodox in their heritage, by the end of 1995 ten thousand Gagauz - four percent of the population - had become active believers in Christ. Revival is sweeping through the Gagauz people. Every village and town in the five provinces of Gagauzia has at least one house group. Young Gagauz believers have expressed a God-given desire to reach their Muslim cousins for Jesus along the 35/45 Turkic Window.

About 8,000 Gagauz came to open-air meetings in Moldova to hear Turkish-speaking Christian Bulgarians, Azerbaijanis, and Turks from Turkey. Because they speak a dialect close to Anatolian Turkish they could easily understand their speakers. Professor Ivan from the Komrad Gagauz University invited them to speak in his classes. As an atheist wanting to broaden his perspective on Renaissance painting, Ivan began reading the Bible in the early nineties - and the Bible renewed him. Now he carries his Bible unashamedly into lectures, knowing that his art history students will ply him with questions about proving the existence of God.

### 3. Spiritual and functional unity in God's people

Synergy has been defined as the interaction of two or more agents so that their combined effect is greater than the sum of their individual acts. Christian ministry in the Turkic World is experiencing true synergy today. In most of these countries there is a wonderful spirit of unity across



Caravans brought peoples, goods, ideas and religions along the Silk Road. Fabulous cities emerged from dusty mirages; oasis pools cooled down the camel trains. Around the caravan-serais men traded and talked and hauled the treasures of faraway lands. From the east came silks, gems, spices, fine porcelain, furs, paper, gunpowder and other goods. From the west came gold, silver, cosmetics, perfumes, ivory and glass. Noodles on the Far Eastern fringe became spaghetti at its western extremity. Along the way men shared their faiths in fear of uncertain fate. They sought the blessings of their gods for safety and prosperity.

At the hub of the network bubbled the cauldron of Central Asia. Nomadic tribes spilling out of the steppes invaded dying civilizations and great empires; they poured their armies into the cauldron, and battled for dominion of the rich lands. The peoples of the 35/45 Turkic Window have been blown here and there by the prevailing winds of power. Vast displacements of refugees, migrating nomads, invading hordes have traveled down the Silk Road, seeking freedom, peace, land, wealth and power.

The armies of Alexander the Great, Tamerlane, and Genghis Khan trod the Silk Road, together with merchants like Marco Polo and Ibn-Batuta. Missionaries, merchants, and mystics left their footprints as they traveled along the way. Buddhists sculpted massive images in rock. Nestorian monks carved Scriptures in stone. Sufi holy men whirled in ecstatic dance and were buried in marble shrines. Franciscan friars prayed for the lost sheep of Asia and left their memoirs in the vaults of the Vatican.

The 35/45 Turkic Window is still a road of dreams and visions, offering great hope while suffering enormous disappointments. Central Asia is still a contested field between East and West, the arena where the values of democracy and capitalism confront the practice of communism, where Islam and Christianity circle each other warily. Today, the treasures of the old Silk Road still beckon to traders, armies, and religions.

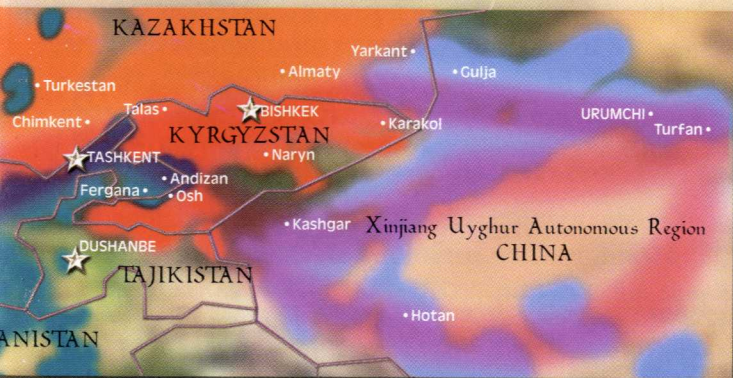
The window is open. A fresh wind has been blowing down the Silk Road since 1991. Will we miss the potential for the Kingdom of God as his Holy Spirit brings new hope to the 35/45 Turkic Window?

### A common culture: Turkic

Bulgarian Turks have shared their faith, culture and their lives with many peoples across the Silk Road. They have planted churches among their own people and in distant Central Asia. Turkish speakers from Turkey, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, and Tatars from the Crimea can understand Bulgarian Turks. Bulgarian Turks speak Russian among the Kazakh and Kyrgyz, since their languages have fewer words in common. Yet their Turkic cultural affinity enables the Gospel message to be transmitted easily and effectively.

Turkmen and the Qashqai of Iran share their love of carpets. An Orthodox Gagauz is united with a Muslim Azerbaijani by a cup of tea. A Buddhist Tuvinian and a shamanistic Yakut are linked by their love of horses. Kazakh and Kyrgyz villagers share fermented

*continued on page 7-right*



■ Uzbek  
■ Uyghur (Uighur)

The Red Line indicates the ancient Great Silk Road



## Nestorian Christianity's advance – one of history's greatest missionary movements

Nestorian missionaries, who adopted the Turkic nomadic lifestyle by pitching "tents of worship," launched a dynamic missionary church movement that established countless congregations along the Silk Road. Secular historians estimate their converts at one million.

In the west, the Gospel rippled out from Rome to convert the barbarian tribes at the edge of the Empire. The Nestorians, on the other hand, penetrated deep into the heart of Asia, bringing the Gospel for the first time to the Huns and Turks of the Asian steppes before crossing the Great Wall into China. In the eighth century, Nestorian missionaries erected a monument in Changan, capital of the Tang Dynasty, to commemorate their success. A century later they were thrown out of China by a Confucian resurgence, only to come back to Central Asia and China with even greater influence under the Mongols in the 13th century.

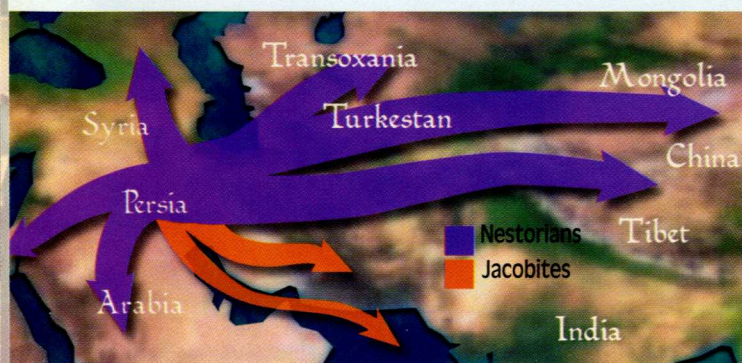
The Nestorian movement began in 431 AD with the Council of Ephesus, held near Izmir in modern Turkey. Political rivalries polarized around Nestorius, bishop of Constantinople, and Cyril, bishop of Alexandria. Nestorius insisted that Christ had two separate natures. Cyril condemned this doctrine as heresy and maintained that Christ was one person.

At the heart of the controversy was the mystery of God: Did He have a mother? After all, didn't Mary have to be the "Mother of God" to produce a God child? The Nestorians vigorously rejected this view, as well as the use of images, the doctrine of purgatory, and transubstantiation, all of which became "orthodox" doctrines in the emerging Church of Rome.

In 451 AD, when Nestorius died as an exiled heretic, the Council of Chalcedon met to resolve the continuing controversy. The wording of the Chalcedonian Creed effectively split the Church of the East into what became known as Syrian Jacobites and Nestorians. This controversy spurred Nestorius' disciples to carry the Gospel eastward, and from the 6th to the 10th centuries they burned as the "bright star of the east" while the Roman church descended into medieval darkness.

The historian Samuel Moffett suggests several reasons for the decline of Nestorianism in Asia: gradual compromise with eastern religions, infighting, and involvement in power politics. Also significant was the devastating wave of destruction and genocide of Tamerlane the tyrant. In the 14th century, Tamerlane swept away all, including the Nestorians, in a scorched earth campaign along the Silk Road.

Despite obvious weaknesses, the Nestorians brought biblical Christianity to the Turkic Peoples of the 35/45 Window a millennium ago. They stand now in that great cloud of witnesses asking, "Who will go again with 'new tents of worship?'"



denominational and ministry lines among both the national leaders and the international workers.

Since 1990 annual meetings have given birth to more than a dozen people-specific partnerships associated with the Turkic World. The Central Asia Consultations provide an umbrella for the development of pan-regional working groups to develop cooperative literature and media projects and to function strategically. Workers from around the globe have an opportunity to meet and share with others committed to the same region, to build relationships, and to coordinate their activities in order to utilize their resources in the most effective manner for the Kingdom.

These partnerships draw representatives from more than one hundred agencies, churches and organizations, and provide an important forum for communication, prayer and fellowship. They seek to develop the following characteristics:

- **International** – *These initiatives draw people and agencies from all continents.*
- **Inclusive** – *Representatives from many different churches and agencies are actively participating, and more are being added regularly.*
- **Integrated** – *They integrate church planting, teaching, Bible translation, radio, relief, business development, water projects, etc. into cooperative initiatives.*
- **Intentional** – *They are not loose networks, but strategic alliances with a common purpose in which the partners agree to work together to achieve clearly defined, obtainable objectives.*

These partnerships will fulfill a vital role in these nations in years to come if they can maintain their facilitating character and provide full partnership to the rapidly developing leadership of national churches.

## 4. Potential for frontier tentmakers in the Turkic World

One of the fastest growing missions in Korea, called InterCoop, is also one of the largest groups active in the Turkic World. Medical doctors, university professors, researchers, businessmen, and other professionals receive their basic professional training in Korea's major secular universities. They then work in their professions in other nations while planting Christian churches and discipling new believers.

InterCoop now has more than 120 people directly engaged in the Turkic World. Accompanied by full-time intercessors who are full members of the team, medical doctors are amazed when they see God miraculously healing the deaf and dumb and those suffering from other physical afflictions. InterCoop's major focus in the Turkic World is church planting; already 12 churches have been started.

The leader of the mission, who has ten years of experience in the Turkic World, teaches Turkology at Seoul National University and a leading university near Pusan, Korea. He brings rich understanding and first-hand experience to the rigorous and practical one-year [InterCoop] training course, which graduates 600 annually. Other expatriates in the region say they have much to learn from their Korean friends. (Contact: [iacd@chollian.net](mailto:iacd@chollian.net))



## 5. Economic uncertainties

Western visitors see much of the 35/45 Turkic Window from refurbished airports and hotels. They hear of rich natural resources such as oil and gold, and quickly conclude that the area is an economically developing Modern Silk Road. The inner reality is very different.

The standard of living for the average person has declined rapidly in the last ten years. Officially, one in ten is unemployed; the reality is closer to seven in ten. The World Bank estimates that 90 percent of the people are malnourished in some countries. Families struggle to find enough money to buy bread and many village schools close down due to lack of funds to operate.

In one nation Christian leaders met to discuss obstacles to the work of God in the country. The first point of discussion was the economic obstacle. There are no jobs for people, and the typical believer is poor and unemployed.

Economic uncertainty, massive unemployment, and great national vulnerability pervade the Turkic World. But, following the "dislocation principle" of church growth, all this results in spiritual openness. It also encourages intensive Bible training and discipleship. In one country a church has developed a three-year Christian training school. In a congregation of 600, one-third have dedicated themselves to serve God full-time. In Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, there are four different Bible and training schools.

More and more countrywide partnerships have formed working groups dealing with business development as part of a holistic approach to Christian witness. The partnerships provide a forum in which different elements of the Body's contributions can be celebrated and effectively linked. One of the newer initiatives in the 35/45 Turkic Window is the Central Asia Business Consultation. (Contact: CABCC@xc.org)

The economic crisis calls for creative response by God's people worldwide. Innovative approaches are being explored, such as business development of entrepreneurs, micro-business investment, and the Chapel of the Rigs.



mare's milk and life in a yurt. A long history unites a secular Bashkir with a Volga Tatar. An Uzbek from the former Soviet Union and a Uyghur from communist China love similar music and poetry. A Turk from Turkey, a Khakass from Siberia and a Karakalpak from the Aral Sea share a common culture and a widely understood linguistic root. While the names and dialects of these people differ, a Turk from Istanbul can make himself understood among Yellow Uyghurs from China's Gansu Province. From the Balkans to the Great Wall of China, Turkic speakers can converse and enjoy a common culture.

The Turkic languages constitute one of the top ten largest linguistic groups in the world. Today, the Holy Spirit is spreading the Gospel through this medium. Three students from Azerbaijan in the west plan to share the Gospel among the Uyghurs in the extreme east. Recently, a Tatar believer spent a summer with an outreach team in Kazakhstan. Kazakhs and Uyghurs in Kazakhstan are crossing the border into China to bring the Gospel to their relatives. Just as in the days of the early church, a common culture and language is aiding the spread of the Gospel.

### A common heritage: The boiling cauldron of Central Asia

The ancestors of the Turks originated in the vast grasslands of Siberia and Mongolia bordering the Altai Mountains. In 552 AD the Eastern "Orkhon" Turks subjugated the peoples of the Eurasian steppes, the Chinese in the east and the Volga River peoples in the west. The Turkic era had begun.

From the dawn of time the Eurasian grasslands have nurtured hordes of fierce warriors. Riding strong shaggy ponies, they spilled out of their pastures and overran cities and civilizations from Persia to China. From the Huns to the Mongols, the barbarian hordes were feared as far away as Rome and Vienna. In the boiling cauldron of Central Asia, some of the nomads settled as farmers and traders and built strong cities with high cultures. In time they too were invaded by new hordes. Seven times successive invasions spilled across Central Asia.

The earliest wave of Eurasian nomads, named for the Scythians and Saka tribes described by Greek historians, lasted from the eighth to third century BC.

Then came the Huns, who terrorized the empires of China and Rome from the third century BC to the sixth century AD. The Chinese built a Great Wall to stop them, and the Pope managed to halt them at the very gates of Rome. The empire of the Huns, considered the forefathers of the Turkic people, reached its zenith under the notorious Attila.

The third river that overflowed Central Asia was the formidable Turkic conquerors who ruled from the sixth to the 12th century AD. Turkic cavalries won decisive victories until they ruled a vast domain called the Turkic Khaganate. The Seljuk and Oghuz Turks ruled an empire from Turkey to India. They also took Jerusalem, fought

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## Timeline: Silk Road Chronology

| AD/BC | Event  |
|-------|--|
| 3000  | Silk first produced in China.  |
| 560s  | Buddha born in Nepal.  |
| 330   | Empire of Alexander the Great expands into Asia.   |
| 206   | Han dynasty develops its vast empire.  |
| 200   | The Huns rise to power in Central Asia and invade Chinese regions. The Silk Road under China's control and the route to the west now open. |
| 100   | Rome becomes an empire from Egypt with access to Silk Road.  |
| 1     | Buddhism begins to spread from India into Central Asia and China.  |
| 105   | Paper traced to China.   |
| 635   | Nestorian Christians from Syria arrive in China's capital.   |
| 750   | Islam emerged from Arabia and took over Persia.  |
| 900   | Kyrgyz Turks in control of eastern Central Asia.   |
| 1000  | First Crusade turns Muslims against Christians.  |
| 1100  | Genghis Khan unites Mongols and launches Empire.   |
| 1260  | Marco Polo saw Nestorian churches in northwest China.  |
| 1300  | Turkish Ottoman Empire in power.   |
| 1400  | Tamerlane imposes Turkish language and culture.  |
| 1600  | Uzbek Turks appear from the north, settle in today's Uzbekistan.   |
| 1800  | The Great Game - Tsarist Russia and British India expand in Central Asia.  |
| 1991  | The Soviet Empire collapses.   |



## The nature and growth of Islam in the 35/45 Turkic Window

Islam came to Central Asia and the Caucasus soon after its birth in the seventh century. The violent Arab conquest spanned roughly the period of 600-800 AD. More peaceful penetration came via traders along the Silk Road from 800-1200 AD. Islam withstood the advance of the Mongol Empire in the 13th century and the Marxist advance of the Bolshevik Revolution. Islam also survived the Stalinist purges and the Soviet Union, which collapsed in 1991. Today, Muslim missionaries are being sent primarily from Turkey, Iran, and Pakistan to the countries along the 35/45 Turkic Window. Mosques are sprouting up in villages. The capitals of the Central Asian states sport brand new, impressive Islamic Centers.

Most Muslims in the Turkic World are Sunnis, but 40 million Azerbaijanis in Azerbaijan and Iran are Shiites. Ninety percent in the Turkic World are considered Folk Muslims, who practice an animistic form of Islam. Formal Islam, which emphasizes a comprehensive code of ritual, is an institutional religion preoccupied with truth, founded on revelation. Most Turks view Islam as a cultural tradition, rather than a religious belief.

Orthodox Islam approaches Allah with an attitude of submission. It concerns itself with issues of origin, destiny and the meaning of life. Folk Islam has a more spiritist orientation to life; its domain is spirits and demons, blessings and curses, healing and sorcery. Its concerns are primarily heart-felt, not cognitive, and focus on the here-and-now. Among the Turkic peoples a "power-principality" is the Turkic sky god named Khan Tengri, one of the highest peaks in the Celestial Mountains, which means "Lord of Heaven."

Seven power components of Folk Islam have been identified by Dr. Dudley Woodberry:

- Powers (beings such as demons)
- Power forces (such as mana)
- Power people (imams and shamans)
- Power objects (charms and amulets)
- Power places (Mecca and saints' tombs)
- Power times (Mohammed's birthday, the night of power during Ramadan, and the pilgrimage)
- Power rituals (prayers and incantations using portions of the Quran).

Many in the 35/45 Turkic Window follow a mixture of Shamanism and Folk Islam. Shamanists believe the earth and animals are inhabited by spirits, and that ancestral spirits can intervene in the conflict between good and evil. Thus, caring for the dead is a greater religious duty than caring for the living. The shaman serves as the mediator between man and the spirits. He is believed to be controlled by the spirits. He puts himself into a trance to heal, foretell the future or to find lost property.

People believe that certain individuals have the power to cause disease and death. When people get sick they consult sorcerers and faith healers, who offer a mixture of animistic insights and poor health care.

Folk Islam is a "power religion," and those who are in bondage to it understand "power encounter." Any type of supernatural demonstration of God's power over the work of Satan and demons shows that Jesus is stronger. This explains the many supernatural manifestations such as dreams, deliverance from demons, and healings in answer to prayer that are experienced by believers in the 35/45 Turkic Window.

There is a marketplace call to the Silk Road. Shuttle traders – suitcase merchants – have unwittingly developed international distribution networks. As Turkic believers these micro-entrepreneurs can take the Gospel across the Silk Road. Christian businessmen can provide support, training, and organization for shuttle traders while furthering the spread of the Gospel. The Turkic World offers a great opportunity for business development and investment in business entrepreneurs. (See story on business development, page 10)

## 6. Believers are experiencing their first love and take God at His Word

As David Saunders prayed with two Turkish-speaking believers in Hungary in 1998, he began to see two major obstacles to the advance of the Gospel in the Turkic World. Later he wrote: "A major catastrophe was the experience of the church in Ephesus. Revelation 2:1-7 says that, despite the hard work and perseverance of that church, they had forsaken their first love. Jesus said if they didn't repent He would come and remove their lamp stand from its place. According to tradition, there was some semblance of revival. But soon the church in Ephesus failed, and there has been little Christian witness in Turkey until this present time."

Saunders also noted a second obstacle: "The ending of the apostolic leadership of the early church and its replacement with more maintenance-minded bishoprics."

As I traveled through the Turkic World and interacted with many of God's people there, one impression came to me over and over again. I realized that they are experiencing their first love, taking God at His Word and seeking to establish the church all along the 35/45 Turkic Window much as the early apostles did. Without extensive ministry training, most believers are practicing supernaturalists who minister effectively in the power of the Holy Spirit, relying on prayer and complete trust in the Word of God.

I met a young married woman who embodies the realities of the believers moving in their first love to establish churches everywhere. A Uyghur with some Tatar heritage, she was raised Muslim. Yet she felt empty. She searched for spiritual truth, even in Hindu's Krishna. Her flirtation with "New Age" philosophies soon led her into the depths of occultism. Despairing of life, she decided to drown herself in a lake on her 17th birthday. Two months before that birthday she heard the claims of Christ for the first time. She said to herself: "This is my last try. If this does not work I will follow through on my commitment to take my life." But her soul was satisfied in and by Jesus. The day before her 17th birthday, she was baptized in the very lake where she had vowed to end her life. She was dramatically changed. As she witnessed among her own people she saw great spiritual fruit. She gave herself for more training, then joined a team to another country and participated in church planting efforts in three other cities.

## 7. Prayer is making a difference

One ministry with over one hundred people serving in the Turkic World integrates intercessors with every team. During 40



days of prayer with fasting, they literally drive along the Silk Road from east to west, interceding as they go. Though they have encountered great spiritual opposition, they believe their ministry is foundational for the ministry of their co-workers who are spread across the 35/45 Turkic Window.

Growing interest in the 10/40 Window is focusing prayer for a spiritual breakthrough in the Turkic World. Millions prayed for the region during the October 1993, 1995 and 1997 "Praying Through The Window" emphases. On-site intercessory teams came to countries along the 35/45 Turkic Window for days of prayer and fasting, asking God for a spiritual breakthrough. One of the October 1993 team members from a Southeast Asian country came back as a long-term worker. She had prayed to the Lord of the harvest to thrust out laborers, and she herself became God's answer to her own prayer.

During "Praying Through The Window IV" millions of Christians worldwide are expected to pray specifically for the countries along the 35/45 Turkic Window, with a special focus on the strategic towns.

## 8. A Gateway to the Muslim world

As Turkic believers grow in faith and learn to obey everything Christ commanded in his Word (Matthew 28:20), they will become a gateway to the Muslim world. Turk will not only reach Turk, but in the fullness of time, Turk will reach out to non-Turks along the Silk Road and beyond. Azerbaijani believers already witness to Iranian neighbors, as happened recently in a refugee camp in Germany. Kazakh believers already pray for Chechen and other Caucasus peoples. Uzbek believers can reach out to Tajik neighbors in Samarkand and Bukhara. Uyghurs can become a key to the Chinese Muslims known as the Hui. Turkic believers could eventually gain access to the Arabian Peninsula, northern Africa, Southeast Asia, northern India, and northwest China. They have already walked across the bridge that God built between submission to Allah and saving faith in Jesus Christ. They have counted the true cost of discipleship. They can point to the grace of God in Christ Jesus as no other Christian can who has not lived under the Shari'a law of Islam.

## Conclusion

The collapse of the Soviet Union caused great turmoil in the 35/45 Turkic Window. There is decay, old crumbling buildings, unrepaired roads, and a spiritual void. But there is also an open window and a fragrance of Christ in the lives of new believers. It appears that God is building His Church more rapidly along the Silk Road than in any other region of the world in this millennium's last decade.

The day I ended my life-changing journey to the Turkic World, a Christian brother spoke to me with deep passion: "The Turkic World is the gateway to the most resistant peoples of the earth. But Jesus has opened a door that no man can shut. It's time to call on God's people to step through that door with their prayer and with their professions, empowering those within to reach their world for Him."



Crusaders and stormed the walls of Byzantium.

A fourth stream were the Uyghurs, sometimes called the "mother of Turkic civilization." They founded a sedentary empire in the oases of the Tarim Basin, in what is today north-western China. For centuries the Uyghurs controlled the Silk Road trade between Persia and China.

The fifth nomadic wave was the most notorious. The Mongols with the Tatars established the largest empire in the history of the world from the 13th to the 14th century AD. Founded by the infamous Genghis Khan and expanded by his sons and grandsons, the Mongol hordes ruled from the Black Sea to the Yellow River, including vast tracts of Russia, China, Persia, and Central Asia.

A Turk from Samarkand, Timur the Great, better known as Tamerlane, was the last of the great Silk Road conquerors. Born in 1336 AD, he aspired to become a Mongol Khan. Instead, he destroyed the Mongol Empire, drove the Ottoman Turks to conquer the Byzantine Empire, and wiped Nestorian Christianity from Central Asia. In his wake, he left pyramids of skulls in the ashes of the cities he burned.

The sixth stream came with less force. Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, Turkmen, and Uzbeks arose from the remnants of the Mongol Empire. Today, the peoples of the states of Central Asia — Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan — share a common past that disappears into the mists of history.

The Russians and the Chinese dominated Central Asia as the seventh major invasion, beginning at the end of the eighteenth century. Both China and Russia pursued a "divide and conquer" policy against Turkic unity, creating separate ethnic identities and setting Turk against Turk. The imposed Soviet rule tried to replace Turkic commonality, but inevitably it failed.

Today, the cauldron of Central Asia continues to spill over with nationalistic fervor, only to be clamped down by conformity to a unifying vision of the State of Islam.

## A common vision: The 35/45 Turkic Window for Christ

The Tien Shan, or Celestial Mountains, split east and west Turkestan. The glacier-draped peaks of Khan Tengri (22,948') and Pobeda (24,405') look down on a spiritual ice dam in Central Asia. Locked into that dam, the frozen souls of the peoples of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and eastern Turkestan wait for salvation.

On the Central Asian side, the ice is slowly melting and many souls are being saved through faith in Jesus Christ. On the Chinese side, millions of Uyghurs, Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, Uzbek, Tatars, and other Turkic peoples are frozen in the twin dams of communist atheism and fundamentalist Islam.

The Church is finally emerging in the Turkic World from centuries of cold darkness. The northwest territories of the Peoples Republic of China have become the Promised Land for

*continued on page 11-right*



## Entrepreneurs and evangelists working together for the Gospel

Unemployment in much of the Turkic World is reaching historic levels. Christians can meet real needs in the region by emphasizing economic and business development, which is exactly what the governments of many countries are requesting.

A veteran worker in one Central Asian country reports that the indigenous church is very capable of evangelizing their own nation...and is already doing it. What the church needs most, he states, is jobs! The Business Professional Network (BPN) of the AD2000 & Beyond Movement has established an independent company to train national entrepreneurs in Central Asia and provide access to the capital they need.

BPN is based on a proven program that has generated 200 growing, profitable companies in Romania since 1991. It is being implemented by Western Christians who are willing to invest in the startup businesses of their Turkic brothers and sisters. Capable business people who can provide high quality goods and services with limited resources are selected from many applicants. Strict financial criteria, sound business principles and pastoral recommendations for godliness and faithfulness are required.

Accepted entrepreneurs will have already demonstrated their business skill and good reputation in their communities by successfully obtaining working capital and production facilities before they undertake this program of expansion. A five-year training course helps these entrepreneurs grow their businesses to higher levels.

Christian entrepreneurs in Romania today are active in a wide range of industries - auto repair, baking, millwork and joinery, metal working, construction - at levels they never imagined possible. Training and better production tools allow them to increase both their output and their profits.

The BPN program creates jobs, helps participants build a reputation for honesty and quality work, and generates profits that allow the Christian business people to fund Gospel outreaches as the Lord directs them. The standard of living for the owners, employees and customers begins to improve immediately. Large amounts of capital are not necessary in many developing countries, but shared expertise and encouragement are very important.

It is poor theology that considers work unholy or profit unfair. The consequences of such a defective theology or ideology are widely visible in the unemployment that impoverishes many nations. A true biblical understanding of labor in God's plan for life emphasizes diligence, skill, hard work, planning and investment. Through the Business Partnership Program individual Christians in Western nations join hands with their Eastern brothers and sisters to reap the rewards of work as a means of spiritual growth and expression.

## What You Can Do

The plight - and the potential - of the 35/45 Turkic Window demands action. The opportunities for such action are limitless. You can...

- **Partner in awareness** by becoming informed about what God is doing in the 35/45 Turkic Window today. Some excellent resources include:  
Prayer Guide: "Central Asia: Praying Along the Silk Road"  
Contact YWAM at [cafmc@holmsted.org.uk](mailto:cafmc@holmsted.org.uk)  
Pamphlet: "Central Asia: A Time for Mission"  
Contact: [interdev-uk@xc.org](mailto:interdev-uk@xc.org) (contact point for all the partnerships in the Turkic World).  
Bi-monthly prayer bulletin: "Call to Prayer" (gives prayer needs for the entire Turkic World).  
Contact: [TWOSteve@onlinecol.com](mailto:TWOSteve@onlinecol.com)
- **Partner in advocacy** by becoming an advocate for one of the unreached people groups or one of the strategic towns in the 35/45 Turkic Window. Use your influence and whatever forums are available to share the needs and invite others to become partners as well.
- **Partner by giving** to projects and programs within the 35/45 Turkic Window.
  - Turk-to-Turk church planting project: Since 1995 has been facilitating indigenous Turkic pastors and evangelists to spearhead pioneer church planting efforts in the 35/45 Turkic Window. Funds earmarked "Turk-to-Turk" should be sent payable to Antioch Network, 5060 N. 19th Ave., Suite 306, Phoenix, AZ 85015. Phone (602) 589-7777.  
Contact: [info@AntiochNetwork.org](mailto:info@AntiochNetwork.org) or Ichthus in the UK at [100014.1000@compuserve.com](mailto:100014.1000@compuserve.com)
  - Turkic peoples. These multi-national partnerships can introduce churches, agencies, and individuals to strategic opportunities to contribute to church planting movements among each of these peoples. Contact: [interdev-uk@xc.org](mailto:interdev-uk@xc.org)
- **Partner in personnel** by establishing a personal link to the 35/45 Turkic Window. Send/support a tent-maker, non-resident worker or long-term team. Invite them into your home, write them regularly, and support them through your resources and prayers.
- **Partner in sharing the Gospel** by writing to Turkic homes (more than 13,000 letters now arrive each month). Or become a Pen Friend with a Turkish student who is studying English. Contact Turkic World Outreach: [TWOSteve@onlinecol.com](mailto:TWOSteve@onlinecol.com)
- **Partner in ventures** with local entrepreneurs through the Business and Professional Network (BPN). Contact John Warton, Coordinator: [john@bpn.org](mailto:john@bpn.org)



Cover faces images courtesy: The Caleb Project



## How You Can Pray

### Pray for National Leaders

- Pray for God's blessing on the heads of government, other ministers and officials.
- Pray for freedom to proclaim the Gospel in the countries of these national leaders.
- Pray that the leaders' family members will hear the Gospel, and that the leaders will meet genuine believers.
- Pray that God will give the leaders wisdom to rule their countries with justice, righteousness and mercy.
- The heads of the nations where many Turkic people live are:

Azerbaijan: . . . . President Heydar Aliyev  
 Bulgaria: . . . . . President Petar Stoyanov  
 China: . . . . . President Jiang Zemin  
 Iran: . . . . . President Ali Mohammad Khatami-Ardakani  
 Kazakhstan: . . . . President Nursultan Nazarbayev  
 Kyrgyzstan: . . . . President Askar Akayev  
 Moldova: . . . . . President Petru Lucinschi  
 Russia: . . . . . President Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin  
 Tajikistan: . . . . . President Emomali Rakhmonov  
 Turkey: . . . . . President Suleyman Demirel  
 Turkmenistan: . . . . President Saparmurat Niyazov  
 Ukraine: . . . . . President Leonid D. Kuchma  
 Uzbekistan: . . . . . President Islam Karimov

### Pray for the Christians

- Pray for pastors who are in prison for their faith.
- Pray that believers will grow under persecution.
- Pray that marriages will become strong and model the relationship of Christ and the Church.
- Pray that believers will mature in their faith and find appropriate teaching to build them up.
- Pray for creative opportunities for tentmaking workers, business development efforts and for more long-term workers.
- Pray for strengthened spiritual and functional unity in working together in ministry partnerships.
- Pray for indigenous movements like the fifth to 15th century Nestorians. Today Millet Turks, Azerbaijanis, Kazakhs, and others are moving apostolically among their cousins along the Silk Road.
- Pray for the speedy completion of new Turkic translations of the Scriptures and for their wide distribution.
- Pray that the new Turkic congregations will develop both a local and a "regions beyond" focus.

### Pray for the Muslim people

- Pray that they will open the Turkic Gateway wide to receive Issa (Jesus) not only as the prophet, but also as the Son of God.
- Pray that the spiritual bondage of centuries will be broken.
- Pray for peace and stability in Afghanistan.
- Pray that the Turkic people might "Take the helmet of salvation" (Ephesians 6:17a). "Turk" means "helmet."

the emerging Turkic church. In Azerbaijan many believers shared their vision of an eagle with the beak pointing east directly along the Silk Road toward China. God's people share a growing common vision for the entire Turkic World.

One man has had a major influence in the melting of the massive spiritual ice dam of the Turkic World. Expatriates and nationals both recognize him as a leader in the advance of God's Kingdom along the 35/45 Turkic Window. A group of us were served an elaborate tea in his home as he shared his amazing story.

He told us that in his entire nation there were but a handful of believers in 1990, today there are thousands. While he was studying at college, a friend invited him to a church meeting. On the third visit he gave his life to the Lord. It was a difficult time in their lives. His oldest daughter was paralyzed as a child and could not walk, his wife had tuberculosis, and he worked on night duty. He cried out to God for help, and after he prayed for the eldest daughter she was healed and started to walk.

That was in 1992. After fasting for one month he sensed that God was speaking to him about beginning a fellowship among his people. Then, he was given a vision of the villages beyond. Without any idea of how to start a church or how to train leaders, he began to visit villages, preaching the Gospel and praying for the people. He saw people set free from demons and healed. Upon leaving a village he would appoint a leader to watch over the group of new believers. In just five years, churches have been started in some 40 villages across national boundaries and among several different people groups.

The vision that unfolded from his heart ignited in the spirit of the six of us who sat on the carpet around his table. "I see a picture of Central Asia," he said. "I see many churches opening. I see two roads across the Silk Route, one going westward toward Turkmenistan to Turkey and another eastward to China. I believe there will be many miracles in Turkey, Afghanistan and China, especially among the Uyghurs, Uzbeks, and Kazakhs. I believe we will see many Muslims come to Christ. In this place we need to prepare many workers to go on these roads. Can you help us?"

As we heard the dream and prayers of the Millet Turks in Plovdiv, Bulgaria...as we were invited to worshipfully dance with Uyghur believers...as we heard their testimony of receiving the first book of the Bible translated into their language...we began to see the unfolding of the drama of redemption across the 35/45 Turkic Window.

What then should you ask of God? The answer: "Master, Lord, my 'Khan,' what would you have me to do?"

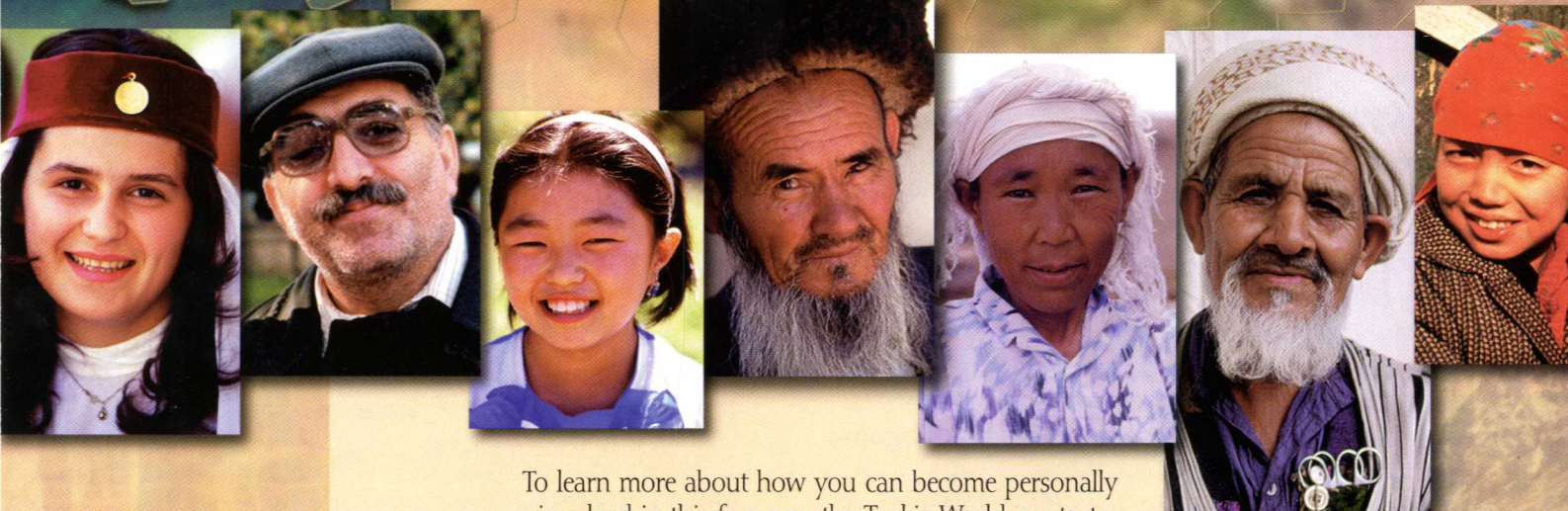
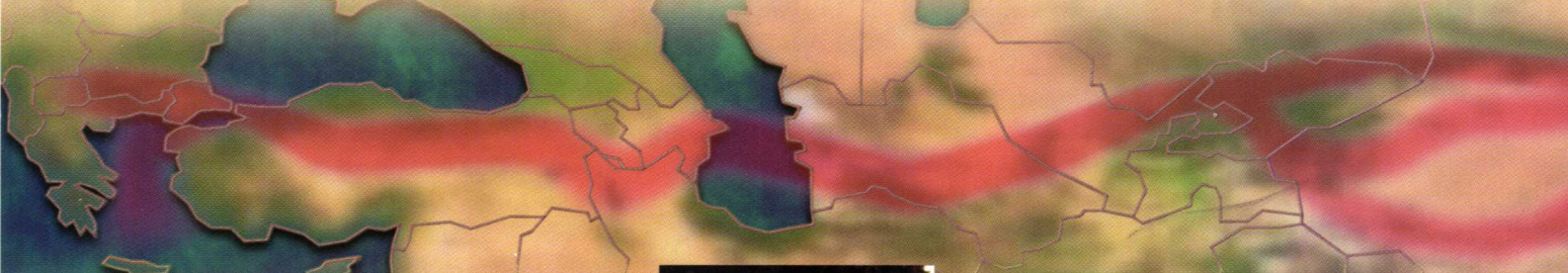
## Turkic People Cluster Table

| TURKIC PEOPLE CLUSTER | 1998 POPULATION | 1990 ACTIVE BELIEVERS | 1999 ACTIVE BELIEVERS | AVERAGE ANNUAL BELIEVER GROWTH RATE DURING THE 1990's |
|-----------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|---|
| Azerbaijani           | 32,228,000      | 5                     | 2,301                 | 97.6%   |
| Gagauz                | 514,000         | 1,000                 | 10,005                | 29.2%   |
| Kazakh                | 11,621,000      | 20                    | 7,348                 | 92.8%   |
| Kyrgyz                | 3,239,000       | 20                    | 1,515                 | 61.7%   |
| Tatar                 | 8,324,000       | 25                    | 2,440                 | 66.4%   |
| Turkish               | 50,708,000      | 561                   | 16,880                | 46.0%   |
| Turkmen               | 5,356,000       | 5                     | 300                   | 57.6%   |
| Uyghur                | 8,530,000       | 10                    | 450                   | 52.6%   |
| Uzbek                 | 21,322,000      | 5                     | 1,000                 | 80.2%   |
| Other                 | 3,713,000       | 10                    | 870                   | 64.2%   |
| Totals                | 145,555,000     | 1,661                 | 43,109                | 43.6%   |



# The 35/45 Turkic Window

## A Gateway to the Muslim World



To learn more about how you can become personally involved in this focus on the Turkic World, contact:

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This publication is the latest in a series highlighting the history, progress and focus of the AD2000 & Beyond Movement as it presses toward the goal of a church for every people and the gospel for every person by the year 2000.

The 10/40 Window: Getting to the Core of the Core  
The Unfinished Task: It Can Be Done  
Joshua Project 2000

To the Uttermost Part: The Call to North India  
The Arabian Peninsula: An Opening at the Heart of the 10/40 Window  
The Horn of Africa: Challenge and Opportunity  
The Maghreb: Ancient North Africa Yearns for Rebirth  
The 35/45 Turkic Window: A Gateway to the Muslim World

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2000**