

## Turks in Turkey

The Turks originated in Turan, a region that lies between the Caspian Sea and the Mongolian Desert. They arrived in Anatolia, Turkey (Asia Minor) in the eleventh century as conquering warriors. By the year 1299, the Ottoman Dynasty began ruling over what would become a vast empire, greater in area than the Roman Empire, and held the Caliphate lamented by Muslim fundamentalists. Over twenty states fell under Ottoman rule, including Southern Russia, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Egypt, Libya, and Saudi Arabia. This huge empire lasted until Turkey became a republic in 1923.

Under the Ottomans Christians and Jews were tolerated, but were second-class citizens. The Armenians were persecuted and murdered in mass numbers. After the Empire collapsed in World War I and in subsequent war with Greece, many of the remaining Greek Christians were driven out of western Turkey. Since the 1920s modern Turkey has become a secular, developed nation that sits, literally and symbolically, between the Christian West and the Muslim world.

Turkey is considered to be a "link" between the Orient (Chinese and Mongols) and the Occidental (Anglo-Saxons, Slavs, Goths, and Latins). The Turk, therefore, have a knowledge and mixture of both Eastern and Western cultures.

Turkey is the only secular republic with a majority of the population being Muslim. Turkish law is not based on Islamic law, but is rather a republic modelled after the Swiss and French legal systems.

The Turks represent a great opportunity to create a "fulcrum" church movement that could reach many other Muslim people groups.

The Turks of Turkey are predominantly nominally Sunni Muslim, believing in one god (Allah), and an eternal heaven and hell. However, they also have many ethnic beliefs as well. For example, they believe that men have the power to curse others by giving them the "evil eye." They believe that one is protected against such a curse by wearing blue beads, which the evil eye cannot face. Another way to avoid this cursing glare is to spit in a fire and pray to Allah. They also believe that if a woman puts fish oil around a door and a man walks through it, he will love her for the rest of his life.

One of the unique characteristics of Turkey is that they are a country where Muslims sometimes go and pray in churches and synagogues on special occasions. Judaism and Christianity and their prophets are generally respected by Turks. There might be extremes, as also seen in other religions, but it is generally not approved by the Turkish majority.

Memories of conflict with Christians, and a desire to join Europe while remaining Islamic may stand as barriers.

Although the Turks of Turkey have Christian resources (both the Bible and the Jesus film have been translated into Turkish) available to them in their language and missions agencies have worked among them, they remain strongly Muslim. Prayer alone has the power to break through the strongholds of Islam. Intercessors are needed to daily stand in the gap and pray for the salvation of these precious people.

Negative attributes of modern urban life such as drunkenness, drug use, and prostitution exist. Such an atmosphere can lead to identity crises that could lead individuals to Christ, or to fundamentalist Islam, or to destruction.

## Prayer Points:

### Pray...

- that churches and missions organizations will accept the challenge of adopting and reaching the Turks.
- for God to give the Turkish believers boldness to share the Gospel with their own people.
- that God will grant wisdom and favor to missions agencies focusing on the Turks.
- for the Lord to save key leaders among the Turks who will boldly declare the Gospel.
- that many Turks living abroad will be reached with the Gospel and will take it back to Turkey.
- that Turkey will avoid both ethnic strife (especially with the Kurds) and resurgent Muslim fundamentalism.

# Catechism

73 Q. How is the Word to be read and heard that it may become effectual to salvation?

A. That the Word may become effectual to salvation, we must attend to it with diligence (Prov. 8:34), preparation (1 Pet. 2:1-2), and prayer (Ps 119:18), receive it with faith (Heb. 4:2), and love (2 Thess. 2:10), lay it up into our hearts (Ps. 119:11), and practise it in our lives (Jas. 1:25).

74 Q. How do Baptism and the Lord's Supper become spiritually helpful?

A. Baptism and the Lord's Supper become spiritually helpful, not from any virtue in them, or in him who does administer them (1 Cor. 3:7; 1 Pet. 3:21), but only by the blessing of Christ (1 Cor. 3:6), and the working of the Spirit in those who by faith receive them (1 Cor. 12:13).

75 Q. What is Baptism?

A. Baptism is an ordinance of the New Testament, instituted by Jesus Christ (Matt. 28:19), to be to the person baptised a sign of his fellowship with him, in his death, and burial, and resurrection (Rom. 6:3; Col. 2:12), of his being ingrafted into him (Gal. 3:27), of remission of sins (Mk. 1:4; Acts 22:16), and of his giving up himself to God through Jesus Christ, to live and walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:4-5).

76 Q. To whom is Baptism to be administered?

A. Baptism is to be administered to all those who actually profess repentance towards God (Acts 2:38; Matt. 3:6; Mk. 16:16; Acts 8:12, 36-37; Acts 10:47-48), and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and to none other.

77 Q. Are the infants of such as are professing to be baptised?

A. The infants of such as are professing believers are not to be baptised, because there is neither command nor example in the Holy Scriptures for their baptism (Exod. 23:13; Prov. 30:6).

78 Q. How is baptism rightly administered?

A. Baptism is rightly administered by immersion, or dipping the whole body of the person in water (Matt. 3:16; Jn. 3:23), in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, according to Christ's institution, and the practice of the apostles (Matt. 28:19-20), and not by sprinkling or pouring of water, or dipping some part of the body, after the tradition of men (Jn. 4:1-2; Acts 8:38-39).

79 Q. What is the duty of such as are rightly baptized?

A. It is the duty of such as are rightly baptized, to give up themselves to some particular and orderly Church of Jesus Christ (Acts 2:47; 9:26; 1 Pet. 2:5), that they may walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless (Lk. 1:6).

80 Q. What is the Lord's Supper?

A. The Lord's Supper is an ordinance of the New Testament, instituted by Jesus Christ; wherein, by giving and receiving bread and wine, according to his appointment, his death is shown forth (1 Cor. 11:23-26), and the worthy receivers are, not after a corporeal and carnal manner, but by faith, made partakers of his body and blood, with all his benefits, to their spiritual nourishment, and growth in grace (1 Cor. 10:16).

81 Q. What is required to the worthy receiving of the Lord's Supper?

A. It is required of them who would worthily partake of the Lord's Supper, that they examine themselves of their knowledge to discern the Lord's body (1 Cor. 11:28-29), of their faith to feed upon him (2 Cor. 13:5), of their repentance (1 Cor. 11:31), love (1 Cor. 11:18-20), and new obedience, (1 Cor. 5:8) lest coming unworthily, they eat and drink judgment to themselves (1 Cor. 11:27-29).

82 Q. What is meant by the words, 'until he come,' which are used by the apostle Paul in reference to the Lord's Supper?

A. They plainly teach us that our Lord Jesus Christ will come a second time; which is the joy and hope of all believers (Acts 1:11 1 Thess. 4:16).