

2014—Meskhetian Turk

For the past 70 years the Meskhetian Turks have lived a pain-filled existence. The Meskhetian Turks are a Turkish-speaking people whose original homeland was a region of southern Georgia near the border with Turkey. However, in 1944 the Soviet Union under Stalin forcibly deported them en masse to Central Asia where they experienced much discrimination and civil rights abuse. In the 1980's and 90's, when they were finally permitted to return, Georgia did not let them resettle there. Many returned to southern Russia but Russia would not grant them Russian citizenship, and they again experienced severe discrimination and harassment. A small number have been able to emigrate to Turkey or Ukraine or the U.S. Of the approximately 60,000 who remain in Russia, they are located primarily in Kabardino-Balkaria, Stavropol Krai, Krasnodar Krai, or Rostov Oblast.

The Meskhetian Turks are Sunni Muslim, but due to their perpetual exile and the influence of the Soviet Union, many of them are not strict adherents of Islam. Many of their traditions contain a mixture of Muslim, Caucasian, and Russian elements. Family and clan ties are extremely important for the Meskhetian people, and have played a crucial role in preserving their culture through their many displacements.

If ever a people have needed the powerful love of Jesus to encourage, comfort, and bless, it would be the Meskhetian nation. Pray for Christian neighbors and friends in southern Russia, in Ukraine, in the United States, and in places like Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan to be the hands and feet of Jesus to the Meskhetian people. Presently there is one known follower of Jesus among the Meskhetian Turks.

PRAY for breakthroughs for Jesus in whole family circles and clans, such as we see in Acts 16:13-15 & 27-34. PRAY that representatives of Jesus' love and grace would recognize the 'people of peace' (Luke 10:6) among the Meskhetians and build many relationships into culture through them. PRAY for overflowing love and the working of the Spirit in power, to meet deep needs in the Meskhetian world and draw many people to the name of Jesus—Acts 8:5-8. PRAY for strong encouragement for those who are serving as vessels of love for the Lord in Meskhetian communities. PRAY that many Meskhetians will come to know that through the grace of Jesus they are children of a Heavenly Father and citizens forever of a Heavenly Kingdom—Philippians 3:20.

COUNTRIES WITH CURRENT MESKHETIAN TURK POPULATIONS (approximate figures):

1. Kazakhstan --	150,000
2. Azerbaijan --	95,000
3. Russian Federation --	60,000
4. Kyrgyzstan --	50,000
5. Turkey --	35,000
6. Uzbekistan --	30,000
7. United States --	12,000
8. Ukraine --	10,000
9. Georgia --	1,000



Meskhetian Turk Wedding