

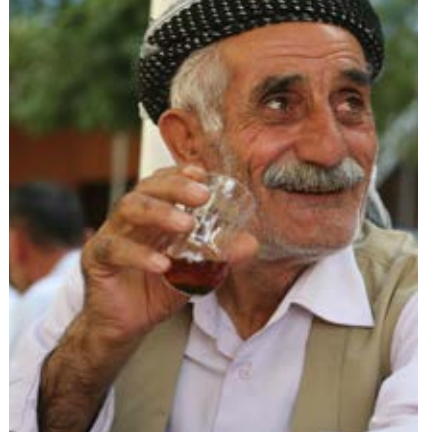
Ankara Samsun Trabzon Rize Erzurum Van



PRAY for



TURKEY CITIES



Batman Diyarbakir Kahramanmaraş Konya Denizli İzmir Uşak Afyon Kütahya Bursa İstanbul



People come from all over the world to tour the cities of Turkey.

They come to get a taste of the rich culture of the country and to connect with its history. It is a history awash in art, architecture and philosophy. It is a history marked by the rise and fall of empires. Over the centuries, earthquakes, fires and invading hordes toppled some of the world's most glorious civilizations, leaving only weathered relics.

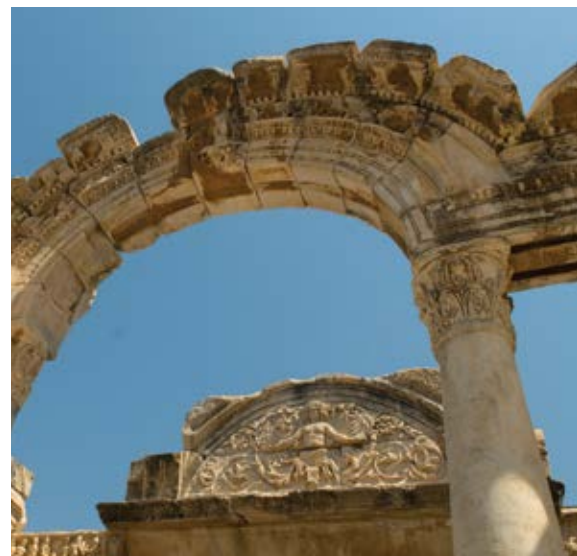
By the end of the first century A.D., Asia Minor was home to some of the most influential Christian churches of the ancient world—Antioch, Ephesus and Colossae. The city churches of Asia Minor were the settings of significant events that altered the course of history. The Apostle Paul was born in Tarsus in Asia Minor. After his life-changing encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus, he was eventually commissioned by the church in Antioch to share the gospel of Jesus with the Gentile community. Peter's first letter was to believers in the provinces of Asia Minor. The seven churches addressed in John's Revelation were all located in Asia Minor.



Despite intense persecution in the second and third centuries, the Christian faith not only survived, but thrived. Humble house churches meeting in secret ultimately grew to become established congregations meeting in magnificent buildings. The breathtaking church of Hagia Sophia still stands in Istanbul as a vestige of the days when Christianity shaped the culture of the Byzantine Empire and the church enjoyed official imperial recognition, wealth and influence. *But the vitality of these churches slowly faded.*

Attacks from Arab, Mongol, and Turkish armies began to whittle away at the borders of the Byzantine Empire. Constantinople, the symbolic heart of eastern Christianity, suffered from corruption and political and theological divisions. When the Latin crusaders sacked Constantinople in 1204, burning opulent palaces and churches to the ground and stripping the city of its wealth, the inhabitants never fully recovered. The fabled city fell to the Ottoman Turks in 1453.

The bustling cities of Asia Minor gradually emptied of Christians. During the Ottoman period many church buildings were converted to *mosques*, Muslim places of worship. The Christian heritage of the region is now a memory etched into the stones of historic monuments and recorded in the pages of history, but is no longer a major part of the cultural fabric of the country. When the modern Republic of Turkey was formed in 1923, there were only about 200,000 eastern Orthodox Christians left in the country and no known evangelical Christians.





So many years after the gospel spread through Asia Minor for the first time,



Jesus looked out over the city *of Jerusalem and wept for it (Luke 19:41).*
Surely today Jesus looks over the cities of modern Turkey with the same compassion and love.

To many Turks, to be Turkish is to be Muslim. Even if many Turks don't pray regularly at a mosque or practice the basic tenants of the faith, their religious identity is fully entwined in their cultural and social identity. The fusion of religious and cultural identity together with a strong nationalist streak has resulted in suspicion of ideas and practices perceived to be foreign.

Persecution of Christians has risen in recent years. Leaders of Turkish churches have been attacked, church members have been threatened and buildings have been vandalized. Concern grows for the religious minorities of Turkey. The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom designated Turkey as a "country of particular concern," due mostly to the treatment of Christians. The murder of three believers in the southeastern city of Malatya in 2007 remains fresh in the minds of Turkey's Christians.

Life for Christians in Turkey is difficult, but there remain a faithful few willing to persevere in their faith. You will find some of their stories in the pages of this booklet, testimonies to the fact that God's spirit is moving in Turkey. Over the last 50 years, a handful of evangelical believers has grown into a strong group of more than 4,000 believers meeting in over 120 churches across the country. The seeds of the gospel planted so long ago are germinating under the surface of a culture that sometimes seems so resistant to the good news of grace through Jesus Christ. But this is only the beginning...

Christian workers serving in Turkey are asking you to pray with them for God's spirit to awaken hearts in cities across the country. Consider leading your church or small group in 10-weeks of prayer for Turkey's cities. We pray that the stories and prayer requests in this booklet will inspire you to be a part of bringing light to Turkey.

Jesus remains the one source of eternal hope for the cities of Turkey.



ANKARA

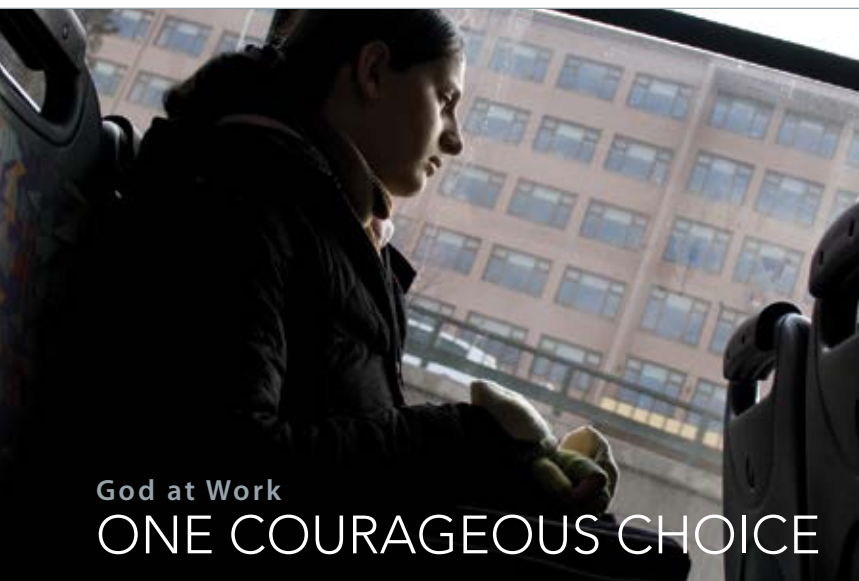


Population 5,000,000

Good to know

- ◆ Ankara is the capital city of Turkey.
- ◆ Ankara bustles with shopping malls, mosques and countless coffee shops crowded by young professionals. Within the city, traditional teahouses and decaying shanties mingle with gleaming high-rise apartments—a blend of old and new.
- ◆ There are essentially two Turkeys that reside in Ankara—one gazing westward, and the other looking eastward. A small minority wish for a true Islamic state, while for others Islam is merely a part of cultural identity. The majority of Ankara's citizens fall somewhere between these extremes.





God at Work ONE COURAGEOUS CHOICE

More than twenty years ago Gamze* received a New Testament in the mail. She hadn't requested it and didn't know where it had come from. She had no interest in the book and gave it to her sister Elif.* After reading the Bible, Elif called the phone number printed in the back and began meeting with the believer who sent the Bible. Soon Elif became a follower of Jesus even though Gamze ridiculed her for believing "such rubbish."

Gamze, meanwhile, began to have dreams about Jesus. She tried to ignore the dreams, but eventually her curiosity about Jesus overrode her determination to hold on to her Muslim roots. As she read the Bible for herself, she found the message in the pages to be true. She began to meet with other believers and soon joined her sister as a follower of Jesus.

When her husband realized she was embracing Christianity, he forced her to make a terrible choice. One day as Gamze was preparing a meal, her husband stormed into the kitchen and told her, "Today you must decide: Is it Jesus or your children? You can't have both. If you choose Jesus, leave this home immediately. If you reject Jesus and choose your children, you can stay."

Gamze replied, "My children can't give me eternal life." In response, her husband immediately threw her out of the house. Stunned, Gamze stood barefoot outside her home—she hadn't even had time to put on her shoes or pack a bag. Her two young daughters watched through a window. One threw a pair of slippers to her heartbroken mother.

Despite some very difficult years, God provided for Gamze financially, emotionally and spiritually. Gamze's daughters observed her perseverance and God's faithfulness. Both daughters ultimately chose to follow Christ. From one mother's courageous choice, a new generation of Turkish Christians was born.

PRAY

Pray that the members of the church in Ankara would endure through the many trials they face daily. Pray that they would rejoice in these sufferings and that God would produce in them a firm faith in Christ and a desire for His glory to be made known among the nations.

Many Turks are turning to the internet to find spiritual answers. Pray for them to be drawn to various Christian sites that reveal truth. May God use the internet for His glory!

“*You must decide:
Is it Jesus
or your children?*”

**Names changed to protect identities.*

Photos do not represent the people in the stories.

SAMSUN



Population 600,000

Good to know

- ◆ According to ancient myths the delta east of Samsun was the land of the Amazons. Today, Samsun is a busy port city on the Black Sea coast.
- ◆ Samsun was the planning site for the Turkish War for Independence that led to the founding of the modern Republic of Turkey in 1923.

God at Work

FROM DEATH TO LIFE

On a warm summer day in Samsun, a small Christian fellowship baptized twelve new believers from across the Black Sea region in a nearby river. Most had come to faith through encounters with the church's pastor as he traveled to visit scattered believers.

One of the new believers, Dilek,* is a student in Samsun. Upon hearing of her commitment to Christ, her family threatened to disown her. During a recent visit home, her parents took away her computer and cell phone, and ordered her never to return to the fellowship. Eventually they allowed her to return to school and she resumed meeting with the believers.





The night before the baptism service, some guests were staying in the building where the church meets when they heard a knock at the door. Dilek stood in front of the building with a Muslim classmate by her side.

“She wants to learn my faith,” Dilek explained. As a new believer, Dilek didn’t feel confident to share with her friend. Tearfully, she asked the other believers if they could help.

They invited the girls in and for two hours, the believers sat sipping chai with Dilek’s friend, Fatma,* and patiently explained the gospel to her. The soft spoken college student listened intently as she heard the message of God’s redeeming grace.

Fatma confessed, “I know that I’m not a good person and that I sin. But I don’t know what to do. When I pray it just feels empty.”

She also admitted to being afraid of what the cost might be if she believed.

Fatma stood on the river bank the next morning and watched as her friend Dilek was baptized, the radical step of obedience that, in a Muslim context, marks the point of no return and powerfully symbolizes the passing from death to life.

**Names changed to protect identities. Photos do not represent the people in the stories.*

“
*I know that I'm not a good
person and that I sin.
But I don't know what to do.
When I pray it just feels empty.*
”

PRAY

Pray that God would grant the believers in Samsun boldness to bear faithful witness to the gospel in spite of the cost.

Pray that there would be unity and trust among the believers.

Pray that God would continue to draw college students to himself, particularly through the influence of a number of African believers who are present on the campus.

TRABZON



Population 300,000

Good to know

- ◆ Once an epicenter of trade along the Silk Road, Trabzon now ranks as one of the worst cities in the world for sex trafficking.
- ◆ Prostitution is legal in Turkey, and Trabzon is located directly across from the Russian Black Sea coast, making it a convenient port for prostitution. Desperate Russian women come to Trabzon to earn money to send home to their families, but become ensnared in this miserable lifestyle.
- ◆ Trabzon is a nationalistic city and has proved to be a difficult place for Christians to live. A Catholic priest was murdered in 2008 in Trabzon.

PRAY

Pray for God to expose the sex-slave industry in Trabzon and to bring freedom to the women in this trade.

Pray for the handful of believers in Trabzon to stand strong in an atmosphere of immorality.

Pray for God to open doors for workers to live in the city of Trabzon long-term.

God at Work

A married Christian man living in Trabzon went out with several of his Muslim Turkish friends for the evening. When they brought up the idea of hiring prostitutes, the Christian man stood up to them. He resolutely said, “I could never do that. I love my wife too much.”

The men sincerely responded, “We love our wives, too.”

Realizing he must take a different approach, the Christian then added, “**And I love my God too much. I would never hurt Him like that.**”

At this, the Turkish men had no response. Feeling ashamed, they went home without engaging in any immoral activity for the evening. The Christian not only gained their respect, but also planted a seed of Truth about his personal relationship with a loving and holy God.



RIZE

Population 100,000

Good to know

- ◆ Turkish tea is a centerpiece of Turkish hospitality.
- ◆ Most Turkish tea is grown in the Rize province. Stunning bright green tea bushes cover the steep hillsides surrounding the city.
- ◆ An interesting system of rope-and-pulleys lace the mountains, making it possible for heavy bags of fresh-picked tea leaves to be maneuvered from the heights down to the road below. Likewise, local groceries and necessary items can be delivered to isolated families living in the steep mountains by these same pulley systems.

God at Work

Two unreached, unengaged people groups live within Rize's province. Both the Laz and the Hemşin peoples were once known as Christian peoples, but are now Muslim. There are about 250,000 Laz people, while the Hemşin people are a smaller group of 15,000. Both of these people groups live in isolated mountainous areas often cloaked by rain and fog.

Recently a Christian traveling through the province of Rize gave the "Jesus" film as a gift to a friend he met. That man later gathered a group of friends at his local business and showed the film on a big screen. The people in attendance saw and heard the story of Jesus...most likely for the first time.

PRAY

Pray for God to make Himself known to both the Laz and Hemşin people of Rize. May He use dreams and visions to draw them to the One, True God.

Pray for God to call workers to these unreached, unengaged people groups living in Rize.

Pray for the gospel to be just as prevalent in Turkish society as the tea from Rize.

ERZURUM



Population 500,000

Good to know

- ◆ The residents of Erzurum tend to be nationalistic and wholly devoted to Islam. Those who leave the faith can expect persecution from family and friends.
- ◆ Erzurum is home to one of the largest universities in the country—Ataturk University—with student enrollment near 40,000.
- ◆ The city is gradually becoming more modern and proudly hosted the 2011 Winter University Games.



PRAY

Pray for the door to be open for a team to live and work long-term in Erzurum.

Pray for team unity and a clear vision for ministry in the city and surrounding province.

Pray for many in Erzurum to come to faith in Christ, be discipled, and mature into faithful church fellowships committed to fulfill the Great Commission.





God at Work

FROM IMAM TO DISCIPLE OF CHRIST

Mehmet Shukri was born into a devout Muslim family in the city of Erzurum in 1861. His father, who was a Dervish (a member of a mystical sect of Islam), passed away when Mehmet was eighteen years old.

Mehmet was such a loyal follower of Islam that he became an imam, a Muslim religious leader. While earnestly searching for spiritual truth, Mehmet met a man who changed his life.

A Turkish soldier and prisoner of war returned from Russia, bringing with him a New Testament that he had received while imprisoned. Mehmet borrowed the soldier's New Testament and read it with mounting interest. Eventually Mehmet openly confessed his faith in Jesus Christ. Despite persecution, Mehmet studied God's word and even began to preach. Eventually forced to flee for his life, Mehmet was baptized and changed his name to Johannes Avetaranian (meaning "Gospel"). The Erzurum native became a force in spreading the gospel into Central Asia.

Today there are no known churches in Erzurum, but God is at work through various short-term groups who visit to pray and distribute Christian literature. Their efforts are bearing fruit—in recent years there has been an increase in the number of people requesting enrollment in a Turkish Bible Correspondence Course. Despite the challenges of living in a very conservative city with a harsh winter climate, God is preparing faithful men and women who have expressed a desire to relocate to this city.



God at Work

GRACE IN TRAGEDY

Less than sixty seconds one beautiful fall Sunday afternoon was all it took to change the lives of a half million people in Van. A violent earthquake shook the city, causing homes and businesses to collapse in clouds of dust. It left broken families frantically searching for loved ones through piles of rubble. In the continuing aftershocks a few weeks later, another large earthquake drove out for good the people who had recently returned to their homes. The approaching winter forced many to relocate to other cities—some permanently. Van turned into a virtual ghost town during the winter months—the quiet of the evening often broken by gunshots fired in the air to deter looters.

Through a cooperative effort, both local and foreign Christians were able to take part in the relief effort—providing shelter for the homeless, feeding families who were hungry, and offering medical care to the injured. This tangible help provided unprecedented opportunities to shine the light of Christ in the crippled city.

Almost a year later, the aftershocks are farther apart but continue, causing uneasiness in the hearts of those who lived through the tragedy. The once lonely streets are abuzz with life and activity again. Windowless buildings marked for demolition will be rebuilt. Fresh paint covers over the cracks in the buildings that were deemed safe. Communities of small, white rectangular containers provided by the government dot the outskirts of the city—humble dwellings for some who once lived in spacious homes.

The earthquake makes its way into many conversations—an obvious sign that memories of the day the earth shook will not soon be forgotten.

VAN

Population 500,000



PRAY

Pray for joy and peace in the midst of trials and suffering. May the people of Van understand the fragility of life and seek the Savior with all of their hearts.

Pray for unity among the handful of national believers in Van. Pray for the growth of the few churches in the city and authentic life-changing discipleship of all of their members.

Pray for stable, productive jobs for believers who are unemployed.



BATMAN



Population 350,000

Good to know

- ◆ A high number of honor killings take place in Batman. Girls risk being murdered by family members for bringing shame to the family name. The girls' "crimes" range from receiving text messages from a boy to refusing an arranged marriage. In 2006, the Turkish government began enforcing lengthy prison terms for those guilty of honor killing, but the problem persists.
- ◆ The former mayor of Batman looked into suing film director Christopher Nolan for the unauthorized use of the town name in the movie, "Batman." The lawsuit would have placed the blame for a number of unsolved murders and a high female suicide rate on the film's success.

PRAY

Pray that honor killings and suicides would be replaced with the abundant and eternal life that comes from God.

Pray for young believers to continue to grow in faith and be bold in witness.

Pray for foreign families seeking to move to the city to have open doors to live there and share freely.

God at Work

TRIALS AND TEARS

When Arzu* was still a child, her father took a second wife. As the family dynamics shifted, Arzu was alternately ignored and abused. She often suffered for days without food because her new mother would not permit her to eat with the family. When she was only fifteen years old, she agreed to marry a man simply to get out of her father's house.

Arzu gave birth to the first of five children the year after she married. While she was pregnant with her youngest child, her husband left her and moved to another city. Arzu was crushed. Not only would she have to raise five children alone, but she became the object of shame from friends and family. Not long after her youngest daughter was born, her husband returned home, announcing that he had cancer. Arzu graciously received him and cared for him for the short time he had left.

Despite a life of trials and tears, Arzu is not without hope. Recently she met a foreign family living in Batman. She was hired to teach the family Turkish on a daily basis. One day during class the family gave her a New Testament and told her that they loved her because Christ first loved them.

Intrigued, Arzu began reading through the book. After finishing the New Testament, she asked for an entire Bible. Arzu began being discipled by another foreign family on a weekly basis and she soon confessed Christ as Lord and Savior. Filled with joy, Arzu is now sharing her faith openly despite the possibility of facing severe persecution.

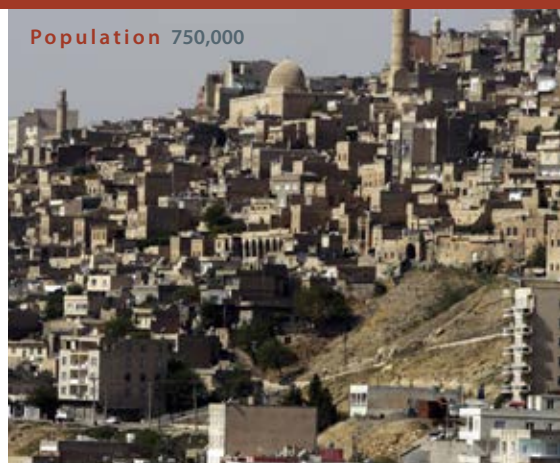
**Names changed to protect identities. Photos do not represent the people in the stories.*





DIYARBAKIR

Population 750,000



God at Work

A TERRORIST FINDS PEACE

Baran* was raised in a family sympathetic to the Kurdish rebels of southeastern Turkey. As a teenager, he protested against the Turkish government. Later his activism turned to aggression when he joined the guerrilla movement fighting Turkish forces. Baran first read the Bible while camped out in the mountains with the rebels. After many years of fighting, he became increasingly disillusioned with the political cause and returned to Diyarbakir.

In the city Baran found his way to a protestant church. He began to search the Bible diligently with a few of the elders and soon turned his life over to Jesus Christ. As Baran studied scripture, his life began to change radically. When he shared with the church leadership that he felt called to be in ministry, he was encouraged to begin by making things right with the Turkish government.

Baran wrote a letter to the government expressing his sorrow for his terrorist activities. He offered to fulfill the requirement for mandatory service in the Turkish military. The government replied that he would have to complete his military service and that, additionally, he would serve time in prison afterwards due to his terrorist activities.

Baran completed his military service and then served more than six months in prison for his previous crimes. While in prison, Baran was allowed to keep his Bible. He took every opportunity to witness to other prisoners about the change Jesus Christ had made in his life. Baran saw God miraculously save two prison inmates prior to his release.



PRAY

Pray that God would continue to use the believers in Diyarbakir to reach out to family members and neighbors.

Pray that as God calls new members to His kingdom, they would stand up to the persecution from family, friends, and neighbors.

Pray for the long-standing civil unrest that has plagued this city for many years and taken so many lives.

KAHRAMANMARAS

Population 500,000

Good to know

♦ Kahramanmaraş is best known for its famous ice cream made of fine goat milk and wild orchid flower roots.



PRAY

Pray that the Lord would raise up a team of laborers to come and serve in Kahramanmaraş.

Pray that young believers would trust God in the face of fear, having hearts knit together in love and emboldened by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Pray for Faruk's wife, that she too would come to Christ and that there would be a believing couple in the city.

God at Work

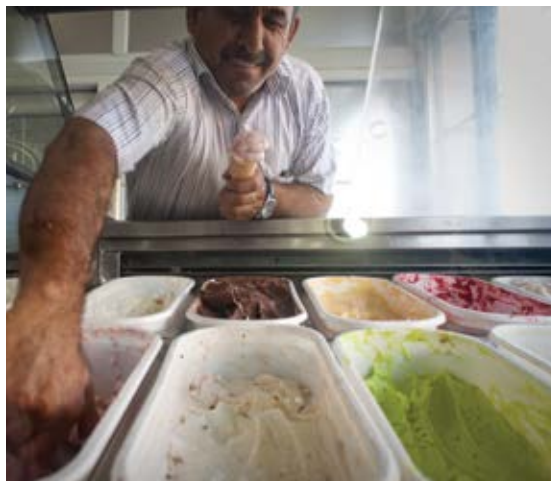
In May 2012, a visitor traveled to Kahramanmaraş with a volunteer team. The team was there to learn more about the city and to ask the Lord to raise up laborers for the gospel. The visitor was surprised to learn that there were already a few local believers meeting together. He decided to find one of the believers to encourage and pray for him. Surprisingly, it was the visitor who ended up being encouraged...

The team met the local believer, Faruk,* in a tea garden. They only expected to spend an hour or two with him; instead, Faruk spent two whole days with the volunteers, introducing them to other believers, reading scripture and singing with them. On a mountainside overlooking Kahramanmaraş, they prayed together for the city, asking the Lord to strengthen young believers in the midst of hardship.

God at Work

Umit,* was working in his office in Konya when he suddenly thought, "Who is Jesus Christ?" It was an odd question for a man who had been living as an atheist since he had become disenchanted with Islam.

Umit stared at his computer screen. Hesitating, weighing his options, he finally typed out "İsa Mesih," (Jesus Messiah) into the search field. His browsing took him to a website that explained the gospel. Umit was hooked—he made a profession of faith almost instantly. But his search didn't end there. For months he stuffed folders in a filing cabinet full of articles about the Christian faith, denominations, cults, and catechisms. With the help of the Holy Spirit, Umit's faith was established in his heart and he went on to read the Bible and mature spiritually without ever having a chance to meet another believer face-to-face.



KONYA

Population 1,200,000

Good to know

◆ Rumi, the revered Sufi mystic poet and theologian, lived and died in Konya. After his death, Rumi's followers founded the Mevlevi order, more popularly known as the whirling dervishes. Pilgrims travel from all over the world to visit Rumi's mausoleum.

PRAY

Pray that the Lord would open the eyes of so many blinded by Islam, revealing to them the truth found only in Christ.

Pray that the Lord would empower believers in Konya to serve the Lord without fear and to become examples to those searching for meaning in life. Pray that the Lord would grow and mature a small fellowship meeting in Konya and make it a true light in the city.



DENIZLI

Population 500,000

God at Work

Mehmet* is 19 years old and a recent high school graduate in Denizli. Two years ago he began to feel dissatisfied with the answers that his Muslim faith offered him.

Looking for answers, he spent time speaking with both an imam at a local mosque and a Catholic priest in a nearby city. He began to read the Bible, getting help from a believer who was staying the summer in Denizli. Mehmet soon believed that the Bible's words were true. Leaving the faith of his fathers was a painful decision, but six months later he was genuinely converted.

Mehmet is preparing to be baptized and has a hunger for God's word and for sharing the love of Jesus with his friends.

He has been meeting regularly with foreign believers to study the Bible and they encourage one another to live lives worthy of the calling they have received in Christ.

Life in Denizli is difficult for Mehmet because there are no local believers in the city who are willing to walk beside him. He is isolated from his family because of his faith and his father has asked him to move out of their home. His friends laugh at him when he tries to talk to them about Jesus. Still, he is resolute in his faith, realizing that while salvation is a free gift, faith costs. He is learning that the price of his faith includes persecution, trials, and hardships. Mehmet knows Jesus has called him to suffer for his sake.

PRAY

Pray that believers in Denizli would stand firm in the faith and that they would boldly proclaim the name of Christ to people who may hurt want to hurt them.

Pray for believers struggling with fear, that they would fear God and not man.

Pray for God to save many in Denizli and form them into healthy churches.





IZMIR



God at Work

Darla* and Sema* came to a crossroads. Sema had been reading passages focused on Jesus from the Qur'an, the Muslim holy book. Darla, a Christian, countered with verses about Jesus from the Bible. After a while, the women grew quiet and stared at the two books.

Sema finally broke the silence. "I have come to an understanding," she said, "I realize that if I am to believe your book, I can no longer believe mine."

Sema realized that the Bible cannot be a supplement to the Qur'an because it has an entirely different message. One of the books was lying to her.

Sema then reflected, "A few years ago, I studied the Bible with a lady; but my intent, at that time, was to argue against Christianity, not to understand it."

She took a deep breath and continued, "One night, this lady said something about Jesus that made me angry, so I decided to leave. I got up, went into her kitchen, and began to wash my teacup. She followed me into the room, and began to cry. She came up beside me and said, 'I wonder if the only reason I came to this country was for you.'"

Darla's heart stood still. Sema slowly turned to her and said, "You remember, don't you?"

Of course Darla remembered. She vividly recalled the burden she felt for Sema's soul that night. Darla still waits for her friend, Sema, to trust Christ as her savior.

**Names changed to protect identities. Photos do not represent the people in the stories.*

Population 4,000,000

PRAY

Pray that our work would be produced in faith, that our labor would be prompted by love, and that our endurance would be inspired by hope in our Lord, Jesus Christ. (1 Thessalonians 1:3)

Pray for the RUN strategy: Pray that God would grant **(R) repentance**, that He would cause the gospel to run **(U) unhindered** along the natural transit lanes across our city, and that **(N) new churches** would be formed. Pray for the gospel to run through our city as churches are planted at each metro stop.

Pray for unity and encouragement among existing churches and believers in Izmir. Pray for a deepening faith and fellowship for the sake of the gospel.

Pray for the workers in the city, as all are still in language and culture acquisition. Pray for them to be bold in their faith and intentional in their relationships, even with limited language.

UŞAK, AFYON, KÜTAHYA

Population 1,000,000



PRAY

Please lift up Cengiz and his family. Ask that God would capture their hearts.

Ask God to overcome the fear in many new believers so that they would be able to live the lives He has prepared for them—that they would meet together, grow together, and lead others to the only source of hope and joy.

Ask that the Lord of the harvest would send laborers into the harvest.

God at Work

Uşak, Afyon, and Kütahya are three cities that form a triangle in the western highlands of Turkey. The combined population of the three provinces is just over one million.

In a small village on the outskirts of this triangle, Cengiz,* a poor tobacco farmer works to put his two daughters through school. Several years ago, he became dissatisfied with Islam. Whenever he could, Cengiz began to watch television programs that explained the good news of Jesus.

After one of these programs, he jotted down a phone number to call for more information. After summoning up the courage, he sent a text to the number and soon received a New Testament in the mail. As he began to read, Cengiz realized that this was truth. He noticed a stamp in the back of the New Testament that mentioned a church in a larger city where his sister lived.

While at his sister's home, he visited one of the church's worship services. There he met a friend who is a passionate evangelist. This friend later visited Cengiz back in his village and as they talked about faith in Christ, they both realized that Cengiz had become a believer!

Cengiz shared the good news with his family and now both of his daughters and his sister are interested. The farmer is growing in his faith, studying the Bible, and trying to understand God's path for him.

**Names changed to protect identities. Photos do not represent the people in the stories.*





BURSA

Population 2,000,000



God at Work

Birk* had been interested in Christianity for a long time. He already owned a Bible, had visited a local church, and had watched the film "The Passion of the Christ."

While he was eager to read and discuss passages from the Bible, his responses seemed academic and his life bore little spiritual fruit. One day he asked a foreign couple if they could give him a Bible to share with a friend of his. They gladly gave him one and said that they'd like to meet his friend.

His friend was a younger female co-worker, Nilgun.* She already had a New Testament from a Bible Correspondence website, but was eager to have the whole Bible. She immediately expressed interest in reading with the foreigners and began meeting with them.

Nilgun and Birk had been in a complicated romantic relationship. The Christian couple spent hours reading scripture and praying with Birk and Nilgun. Over time the couple began to talk about marriage, despite their relationship being more troubled than ever. The foreigners prayed that Nilgun and Birk would become followers of Jesus and that the Lord would be the center of their relationship.

Their prayers were answered. Birk and Nilgun professed faith in Jesus. They are moving forward with wedding plans while understanding that the only way they can have a healthy marriage is by walking with Jesus. They have taken the essential step by believing, but there is much more for them to learn about what it means to be followers of Christ and how to experience a Christ-centered marriage.

PRAY

Pray for our new brother and sister to persevere in faith and to walk in obedience as the Holy Spirit transforms them from the inside out.

Pray for the Lord to bring opportunities to share the message of salvation.

Pray for the new believers to grow in their faith, to love one another, and to be bold in their witness.

ISTANBUL



Population 15,000,000

Good to know

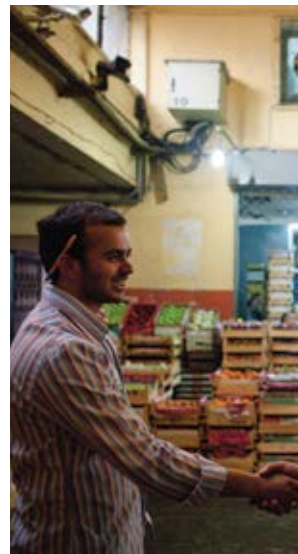
- ◆ Istanbul is the only city in the world that spans two continents—Europe and Asia. Istanbul has been the capital of three of the most important empires in history: Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman.
- ◆ The European side of the city was the location of the ancient city of Constantinople. The crumbling city walls and fortresses that once protected the city now stand adjacent to modern hotels and commercial skyscrapers.
- ◆ The Asian side of the city was cobbled together from what was once a collection of small villages. The gaps between the districts have been filled with gleaming high-rise apartment buildings and shopping malls.

PRAY

Pray for those who are trying to work their way to God, but finding it impossible. Pray that God will reveal to them that salvation is by faith in Christ, who loves unconditionally.

Pray for those held captive by materialism. Pray that they will find true hope and meaning in a real, living God.

Pray for the believers and churches of Istanbul. Pray for them to persevere in love and faithfulness and to know the God who has blessed them with every spiritual blessing in Christ.



Istanbul is intriguingly complex. The city is at once European and Asian, cosmopolitan and religious, progressive and conservative. The population, too, is a study in contrasts. Suited business men sit beside struggling village immigrants on the ferry boats that shuttle commuters across the Bosphorus, textile workers rub shoulders with musicians on the metro, fashionistas in high-heels breeze past covered women shopping for vegetables in covered bazaars.

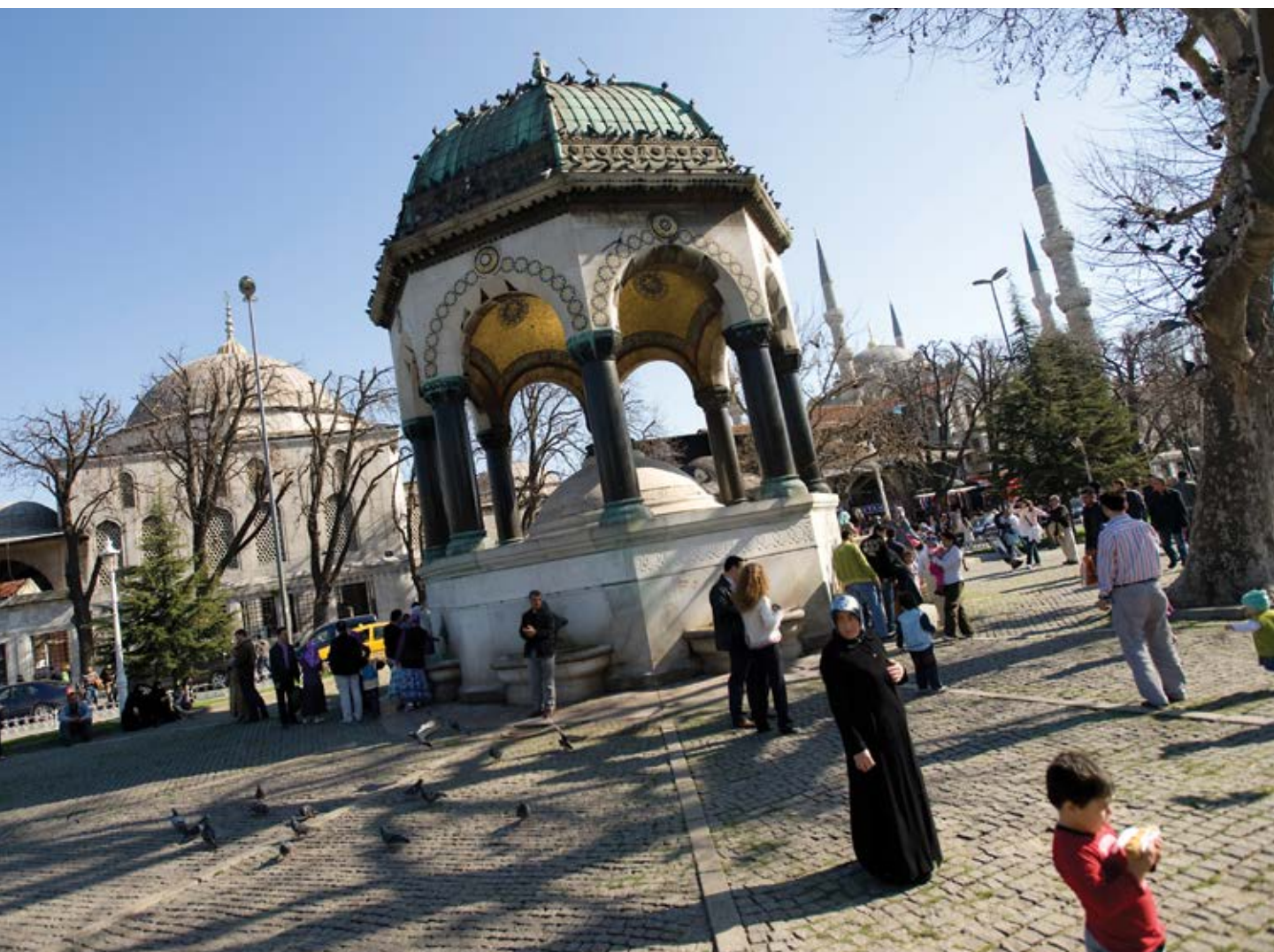
Three brief vignettes are only a glimpse into the lives of the diverse inhabitants of this vibrant city.

Ahmet* is a factory worker living in one of the poorest districts of Istanbul. He works up to 16 hours a day, six days a week to provide for his small family. He moved from a village near the Black Sea because he thought life would be better in the big city, but for him and his wife Hatice*, who cleans houses for families in a wealthy neighborhood, it seems like the better days are always in the future. Ahmet goes to the mosque on Friday and he and his wife fast during the month of Ramadan. He is more faithful than many, so he wonders why Allah doesn't smile upon him.

Ayşe* is a divorced socialite. She grew up in an affluent section of Istanbul. Her life has been defined by comfort and opulence. She meets her friends regularly in upscale cafes to sip tea and gossip. Life seemed exciting when she was younger, but these days she feels empty. She wonders if there is any real meaning in life.

Tolga* is a believer who chose to follow Christ years ago; but recently, when he told his family of his decision, his father wouldn't let him come home for three days. His family treated him like a foreigner in his own home. His mother's glances are filled with tears and his father is a wall of anger. Tolga wonders if he made the right decision. His faith is real, but how can he leave behind his family and the only life he has ever known?

**Names changed to protect identities. Photos do not represent the people in the stories.*





There are more than 73 million Turkish citizens. An estimated 98 percent of them are Muslim. In 2011, there were less than 4,200 evangelical Christian believers in the entire country.

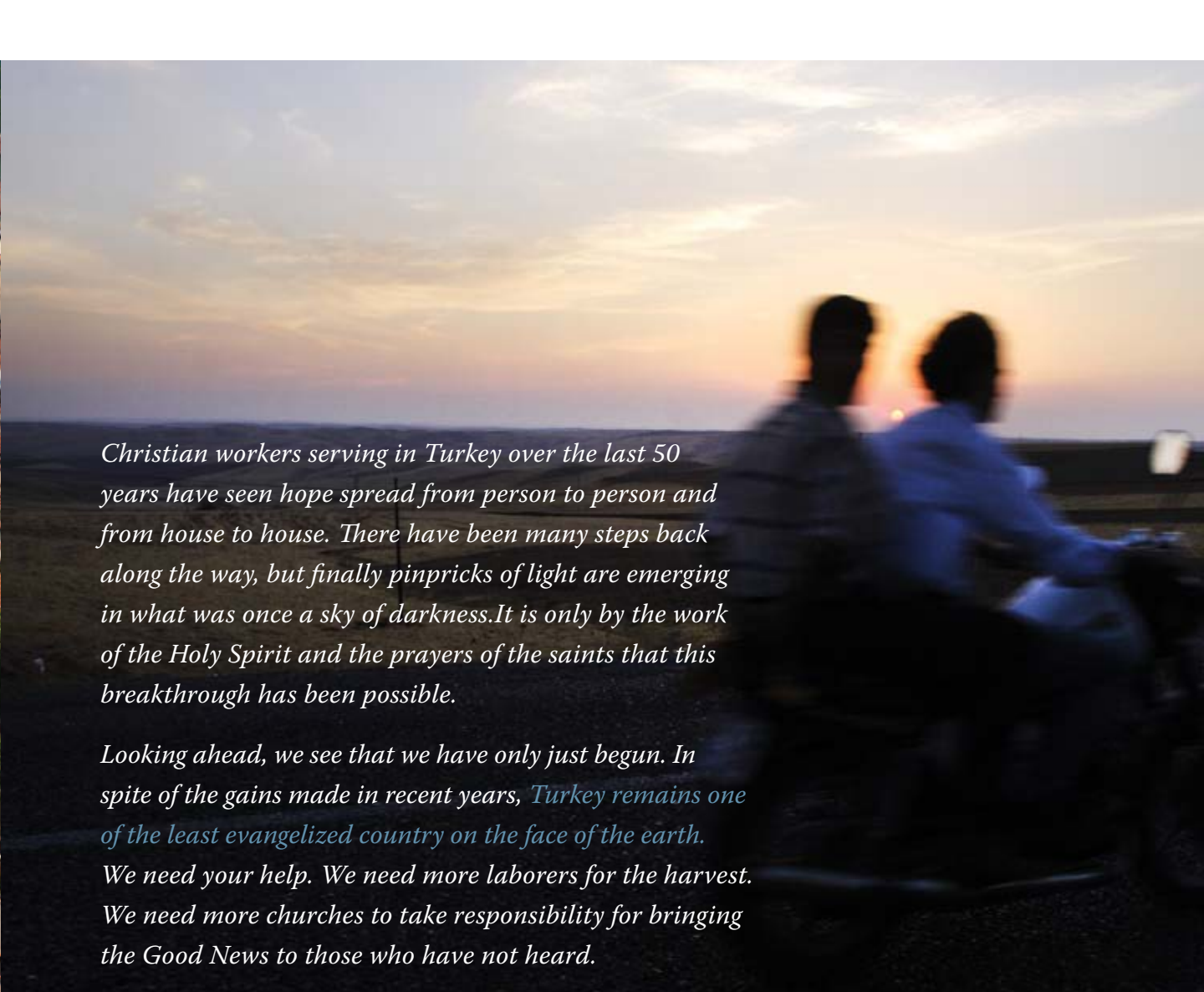




What does the future hold for the cities and peoples of Turkey?







Christian workers serving in Turkey over the last 50 years have seen hope spread from person to person and from house to house. There have been many steps back along the way, but finally pinpricks of light are emerging in what was once a sky of darkness. It is only by the work of the Holy Spirit and the prayers of the saints that this breakthrough has been possible.

Looking ahead, we see that we have only just begun. In spite of the gains made in recent years, Turkey remains one of the least evangelized country on the face of the earth. We need your help. We need more laborers for the harvest. We need more churches to take responsibility for bringing the Good News to those who have not heard.



“You are the light of the world.

A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”

—Matthew 5:14–16

The time is now for the Turkish people. Won't you come and join us in the vital work of bringing light to Turkey. We're waiting for you . . .

4 ways to connect with God's work in Turkey

1

PRAY

- ♦ Lead your church or small group in 10-weeks of prayer for the cities of Turkey. Visit centralasianpeoples.imb.org/pray for additional prayer resources.
 - ♦ Observe the Day of Prayer for Turkey on April 18.
 - ♦ Adopt one of the cities listed in this book. Pray faithfully for it until the church is established. Intercede for Christian workers and local believers by name.
- E-mail pray4turkeycities@gmail.com to adopt a city.

2

GO

- ♦ Serve on short-term volunteer projects in the city that you have adopted.
 - ♦ Come to Turkey to pray for the people you meet and the teams that are laboring here.
 - ♦ Come to minister to local believers and to pray for them.
 - ♦ For information on specific service opportunities:
imb.org
- E-mail pray4turkeycities@gmail.com

3

ENGAGE AT HOME

- ♦ Research to find Unreached People Groups from Turkey living in and around your community. Invite them into your home and your church.
- ♦ Reach out to international students studying at local universities. They are rarely invited into Christian homes during their studies in America.
- ♦ Go to the Turks and Kurds in your state and befriend them, pray for them and love them.

4

GIVE

- ♦ Support ministry in Turkey by giving to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering and through the Cooperative Program.
- ♦ Learn more about how to give online or through a local Southern Baptist church at imb.org



Pray for TURKEY

CITIES

Ankara Samsun Trabzon Rize Erzurum Van Batman Diyarbakir Kahramanmaraş Konya Denizli Izmir Uşak Afyon Kütahya Bursa İstanbul

Detach the bookmark at right and keep in your Bible as a reminder to pray for the cities and peoples of Turkey.

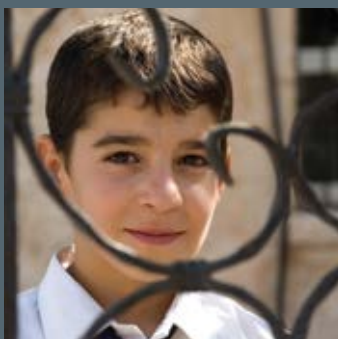


pray4turkeycities@gmail.com
imb.org

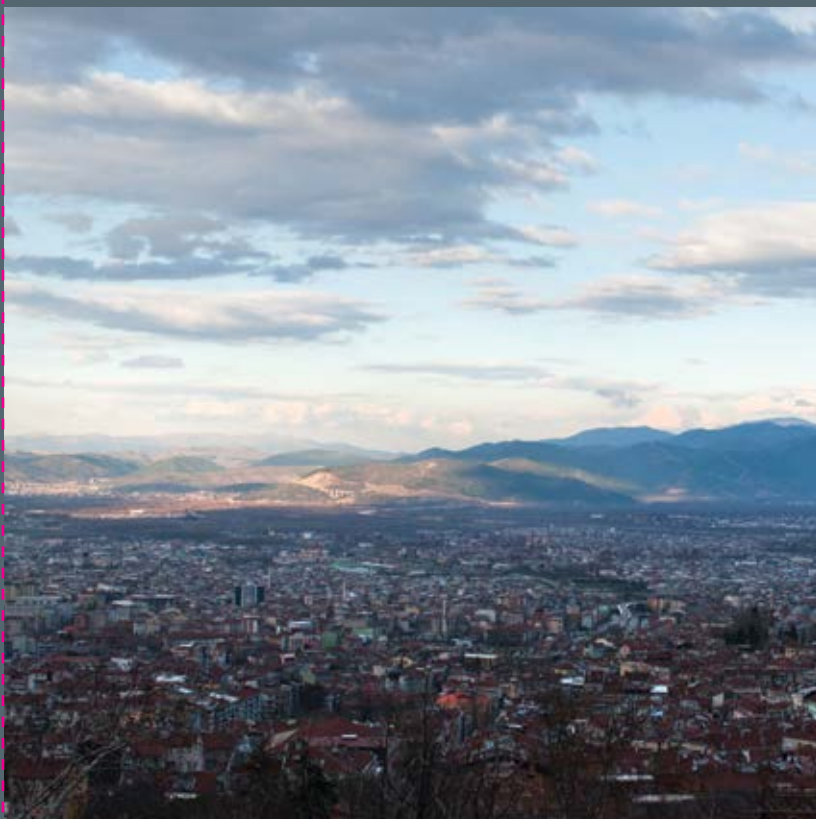
Pray for TURKEY

PEOPLES

Turks Kurds Azeri Crimean Tatar Kazakh Kumyk Laz Hemşin Pomak Tatar Turkish Gypsy Northern Zaza Southern Zaza Pontic Greek



pray4turkeycities@gmail.com
imb.org



If you would like to join our monthly
Central Asian Peoples prayer letter
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