

UNREACHED PEOPLE PROJECT: KAZAKHSTAN

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## Introduction

The Kazakhstan people are a people in need of Jesus Christ. This Central Asian Country is the ninth largest “land mass” country in the world with a population of 8,180,000.



Figure 1: Physical Map of Kazakhstan Showing Bordering Nations  
Source: Altapedia Online: Political Map<sup>1</sup>

Kazakhstan is bordered by: China; Kyrgyzstan; Russia; Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.<sup>2</sup> Joshua Project gives Kazakhstan a need ranking, for missions and evangelism, of 61 points with 100 points being the most needful.<sup>3</sup> The Joshua Project gives us the following projections: *Primary religion-Islam; religion sub-division- Sunni; Percentage of Christian Adherents- 01. %;*

<sup>1</sup> Altapedia Online, “Political Map of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan,” [http://www.atlapedia.com/online/maps/political/Kazakh\\_etc.htm](http://www.atlapedia.com/online/maps/political/Kazakh_etc.htm)

<sup>2</sup> Joshua Project, “Kazakh of Kazakhstan Ethnic Profile” <http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php?rop3=104791&rog3=KZ>

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

*Evangelicals* greater than 0.01 but less than 2%.<sup>4</sup> This country and ethnic group falls into the category of “unreached people group” which is defined as: “a people group within which there is no indigenous community of believing Christians able to evangelize this people group.”<sup>5</sup>

## **Kazakhstan Background Information**

### History

The existence of a people residing in what is known today as Kazakhstan dates all the way back to pre-historic man with many archeological finds supporting this dating. Historically we will pick up at about the fifth century. Attila of the Huns, a historically well recognized Asiatic warrior who challenged the Roman Empire, established a nomadic tribe known as Khanates. Kazakhs, a nomadic people formed loose knit clans in the late fifteenth early sixteenth centuries for protective necessities and eventually formed a political and ethnic federation with distinct identities. “The formation of the Kazakh people began in the mid-fifteenth century, when two princes of the Mongol White Horde successfully laid claim to the frozen lands between the Chu and Talas rivers.”<sup>6</sup>

During the next century a blending combination of Turkic Mongol and indigenous groups joined the pre-existing nomadic Kazakhs to add to their already distinct identity. As an organizational tool the Kazakh people classified themselves into groupings called hordes. “Vostrov and Mukanov, the most authoritative Soviet students of Kazakh tribal makeup, place the formation of the Great, Middle, and Small Hordes in the middle of the sixteenth century during

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid

<sup>5</sup> Ibid

<sup>6</sup> Martha B. Olcott, *The Kazakhs: Studies of Nationalities* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Press, 1995) xx.

the rule of Haq Nazar (1538-1580).”<sup>7</sup>

“During the nineteenth century, the Russians acquired Central Asia through a steady process of annexation. They eventually claimed the entire territory of Kazakhstan. Tragically, about half of the Kazakh population was killed during the Russian Civil War of the 1920's and 1930's.”<sup>8</sup> During the time of Russian dominance many Kazakhs fled to China and Mongolia.<sup>9</sup> In 1991, as a result of the Soviet Union breakup, Kazakhstan regained its freedom, becoming independent of Russia and has continued to slowly develop into what we see as today’s Kazakhstan.

### Language

In Kazakhstan the everyday common language remains Russian; however, in 1989 the Kazakh language was added to the official language of Kazakhstan. Kazakh is a Turkic language with strong Tatar and Mongol influences. “It is part of the Nogai-Kipchak subgroup of northeastern Turkic languages.”<sup>10</sup> “Kazakh is spoken by more than 8,050,000 people: 5,293,000 in Kazakhstan, 1,112,000 in China, 808,000 in Uzbekistan, 636,000 in Russia, more than 200,000 elsewhere.”<sup>11</sup>

### Social Structure

We find in Olcott’s, *The Kazakhs*, a description of a past traditional social structure that

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<sup>7</sup> Olcott, *The Kazaks*, 10.

<sup>8</sup> Joshua Project, “Kazakh of Kazakhstan Ethnic Profile” <http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php?rop3=104791&rog3=KZ>

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Pang G. Cheng, *Cultures of the World: Kazakhstan* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish Corporation, 2001) 83.

<sup>11</sup> Worldscripture.Org, “The Bible in Kazak” <http://worldscriptures.org/pages/kazakh.html>

is unique, customary yet in many senses similar to that of the Mongols.

The Kazakhs adopted their system of princely rule from the Mongol's. Therefore, membership in the Kazakh aristocracy (the white bone—*ak suiuk*) was restricted to individuals who at least in theory could trace their descent to Chingis Khan. The general population of Kazakhs was known as black bone (*kara suiuk*), from which group the majority of Kazakh *biis* and *aul* leaders were chosen; they were eligible as well to serve as khans or sultans. The Kazakhs did not distinguish between civil and criminal law; until the seventeenth century, Kazakh customary law, the *adapt*, was uncodified and administered locally. Kazakh justice was harsh, and the principle that blood demands blood was firmly entrenched; crimes of theft and plunder were punishable by loss of limb or even death.<sup>12</sup>

### Culture

The Kazakh culture puts a strong emphasis on what is known as the “way of the elders.” “According to the “way of the elders,” older persons were always given the first turn when entering a house, at meetings, during special occasions or festivities, when dividing military spoils, and at funeral ceremonies.”<sup>13</sup> Marriage in the past took place at a very young age, approximately thirteen for girls and fifteen for boys, today the age for marriage is 18 and it must be consensual by both parties. Kazakh marriage retains many of the oriental customs and includes a dowry which is normally dependant on the wealth and social status of the groom's family.

### Economy

“Kazakhstan enjoyed double-digit growth in 2000-01 and 8% or more per year in 2002-07 thanks largely to its booming energy sector, but also to economic reform, good harvests, and

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<sup>12</sup> Olcott, *The Kazaks*, 14.

<sup>13</sup> Tripod, *Kazakhstan: General Information*, <http://members.tripod.com/~Dzhan/culture/kazaklaw.html>

increased foreign investment; growth slowed to 5% in 2008, however, as a result of declining oil prices and a softening world economy. Inflation reached 10% in 2007 and 18% in 2008.”<sup>14</sup>

Industrial production is the largest economic segment of Kazakhstan’s economy with: agriculture, forestry, construction, transportation, communication and trade services making up much of the work force.

During the Russian domination Kazakhstan was (and still is) a major provider of gas and oil reserves along with abundant supplies of minerals, coal, metals, iron ore, zinc, gold, uranium, silver and much more. “The country has 70.52 trillion cubic feet of gas reserves and at least 16.4 billion barrels of oil reserve. This later figure might even triple when Kazakhstan's offshore reserves are fully proven.”<sup>15</sup> Though Kazakhstan has tremendous gas resources their inability to move them is hurting the independency of Kazakhstan and forcing them to remain dependant on Russian refineries for distribution. Cooperative projects with China and Western World Nations are currently in process to install new pipelines.

Agriculture is the second largest economic industry with grains, wheat, cotton and rice being the major crops. Wheat is abundant in the north central region while cotton and rice grow primarily in the south.<sup>16</sup>

### Social and Environmental Issues

“Urbanization has fostered a host of social problems; including: crime, alcoholism, and an increased rate of divorce.”<sup>17</sup> In the past the Soviet Union used Kazakhstan as a nuclear testing

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<sup>14</sup> CIA, *The World Factbook: Kazakhstan*, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/kz.html#Geo>

<sup>15</sup> Martha B. Olcott, *Kazakhstan: Unfulfilled Promise* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution Press, 2002) 148.

<sup>16</sup> Cheng, *Cultures of the World: Kazakhstan*, 46.

site because of its semi-arid steppe, leading to an alarming rate of disease in many rural areas.<sup>18</sup> “Most of Kazakhstan’s water supply has been polluted by industrial and agricultural runoff and, in some places, radioactivity.”<sup>19</sup> The drying up of the Aral sea has caused erosion and severe climactic changes in the area.<sup>20</sup> “Industrial pollution is severe in terms of soil, air, and water pollution.”<sup>21</sup> Education and health reforms are being made in Kazakhstan, as school education forms the basis of a vibrant society. Kazakhstan seeks to shift to a 12-year school education system by 2008 and also improve the quality of content in the textbooks. Modern and urbanized Kazakhstan is struggling with many socio-environmental issues that are shared by many other countries such as: illegal drugs, aids and other health care concerns.

These issues must be identified and prepared for by any mission group that is preparing to go on the field for several reasons: it directly affects the missionary and their family, it affixes our focus onto appropriate planning strategies, it allows for a more complete worldview towards these indigenous groups. Some Christian groups have concentrated more on social fairness initiatives than evangelistic efforts; for example, “The United Methodist Board of Global Ministries has launched medical missions for rural poor” and “Presbyterian missionaries have established a hospice ministry for terminally ill patients.”<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Christen A. Van Gorder, *Muslim-Christian Relations in Central Asia* (New York, NY: Taylor and Francis Group, 2008) 24.

<sup>18</sup> Wikipedia: *The Free Encyclopedia: Environmental Issues in Kazakhstan*, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Environmental\\_issues\\_in\\_Kazakhstan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Environmental_issues_in_Kazakhstan)

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Van Gorder, *Muslim-Christian Relations in Central Asia*, 24.

<sup>22</sup> Van Gorder, *Muslim-Christian Relations in Central Asia*, 23.

## Religion

The primary religion of Kazakhstan is Muslim with Russian Orthodox being the second largest. Kazakhstan is mainly a Muslim country; “forty seven percent of the population, mostly Kazakh’s belong to this religion.”<sup>23</sup> Islam was embraced by the Kazakh people in the sixteenth century though some native forms of folk religion is still practiced today. Folk religion with the Kazakh people includes animism, which is the belief that non-human things have spirits, and ancestor worship.

The U.S. Embassy’s: *Department of State, Kazakhstan, International Religious Freedom Report 2008* gives us a detailed summary of the current religious climate and statistics in Kazakhstan 2008.

Ethnic Kazakhs, who constitute just over half of the population, and ethnic Uzbeks, Uighurs, and Tatars, who collectively comprise less than 10 percent, are historically Sunni Muslims of the Hanafi school. Approximately one-third of the population, comprising sizeable numbers of ethnic Russians and smaller populations of ethnic Ukrainians and ethnic Belarusians, are Russian Orthodox by tradition. There were approximately 2,200 registered mosques, all of them affiliated with the Spiritual Association of Muslims of Kazakhstan (SAMK), a national organization with close ties to the Government. There were 257 registered Russian Orthodox churches.<sup>24</sup>

“According to government statistics, Protestant Christian congregations outnumber Russian Orthodox or Roman Catholic congregations,” with 964 registered Protestant Christian organizations .... and 546 places of worship.<sup>25</sup> There are also: German, Catholic and Lutheran churches found in Kazakhstan. According to the 1999 census report there are two Baptist groups, Union of Baptists and Council of Churches with a total of approximately 11,000

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<sup>23</sup> Cheng, *Cultures of the World: Kazakhstan*, 71.

<sup>24</sup> U.S. Embassy: *Department of State, Kazakhstan, International Religious Freedom Report 2008: United States Diplomatic Mission*, <http://kazakhstan.usembassy.gov/irf-2008.html>

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

adherents and 227 registered groups.<sup>26</sup> Other minority Christian groups include Presbyterians, Pentecostals, Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh Day Adventists, Methodists, Mennonites and Mormons.<sup>27</sup>

Finally, the 1999 census reports: Jewish Synagogues, "4 registered Buddhist groups, 11 affiliates of the Hare Krishna movement, as well as Baha'is, Christian Scientists, and the Unification Church."<sup>28</sup> We can see by the diversity of religious groups presently in Kazakhstan the importance for Evangelical Christian Missionaries working within the country. Though the figures for Evangelical Christian groups look promising when it is compared to a vast overall population of 8,180,000 it comes out to a very small minority of under 2 percent.

### **Survey of Missions Work**

#### **Status of the Church**

Though the figures mentioned in the religion portion of this paper seem promising there are indicators that not all Kazakhs are positively open towards the freedom religious groups are currently experiencing. Here are some disturbing quotes that seem to indicate that new hindrances to this freedom may be on the horizon. On January 17, 2008, President Nazarbayev made these statements in referencing missionary groups: "religion is separate from the state, but it does not mean that Kazakhstan should become a dumping ground for various religious movements."<sup>29</sup> Nazarbayev publically stated that he wanted to institute parameters on these groups and their "religious radicalism and extremism."<sup>30</sup> We find in March 2008 several media

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid

<sup>27</sup> Ibid

<sup>28</sup> Ibid

<sup>29</sup> Ibid

outlets portrayed several Christian groups as, “dangerous sects harmful to society.”<sup>31</sup> There are various reports through multiple reporting agencies that have depicted missionaries as undercover foreign intelligence agents who “present a threat to national security.”<sup>32</sup> Many believe that these negative campaigns against foreign mission groups are an attempt to have tougher amendments instituted to the current Kazakhstan Religious Tolerance Law.

Despite the recent negative coverage there are many sincere Kazakh people who are genuinely receptive and hungry for the gospel. Though my personal contact with a particular missionary in Kazakhstan did not work out I was able to find several active Evangelical Christian Groups who currently minister to the Kazakh people. We have already noted two Baptist organizations that have active field operations in Kazakhstan. We can add the following organizations to this grouping: Christian Aid; Send International; Bible Society; Mission Finder.Org and many others. When researching on the internet, for mission groups going into Kazakhstan, I found: adoption agencies; orphanages; teaching, and Scripture translation ministries and opportunities.

Many mission groups such as Christian Aid and Send International are working with the indigenous people to formulate incultural indigenous churches. Here is one description found on Christian Aid’s web site: “Christian Aid seeks to establish a witness for our Lord Jesus among unreached people groups by assisting highly effective native missionaries who already know the languages and culture and are getting the job done for less cost.”<sup>33</sup> Christian Aid works with a

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid

<sup>31</sup> Ibid

<sup>32</sup> Ibid

<sup>33</sup> Christian Aid Mission, *The Uyghur People of Kazakhstan*,  
<http://www.christianaid.org/Missionaries/UPI/Uyghur.aspx>

specific unreached people group found within the Kazakh people; the Uyghur's. Christian Aid's web page gives a brief history of the people and the organization itself. Christian Aid gives a summary of their current work and future goals: "NLMK opened a Bible school, and now has 77 branches and 29 mission stations in Central Asia. The goal of ministry workers is to open 1,000 new churches."<sup>34</sup>

Send International is a mission group that is working directly with a previously mentioned Baptist Group, Baptist Union. Their web page gives this vision statement, "SEND is building teams to partner with the Baptist Union. New SEND members will study language and as they develop language proficiency, they will work side by side with our Baptist brothers to build up and strengthen the church as it makes known the gospel to the peoples of Kazakhstan."<sup>35</sup> Send International gives a detailed description of the Baptist Church Movement in Kazakhstan and attribute the development of the first church as being organized as early as 1903 which many believe to be the start of the "movement of the Evangelical Christian Baptists in Kazakhstan."<sup>36</sup>

### How Many Known Believers

It is difficult to give an accurate account of how many known true believers are in Kazakhstan. One of the difficulties is the looseness of what one considers to be a "true believer." I have already detailed a lot of groupings and statistics in the religion portion of this paper. To me, the writer, many of these described groups that were classified by the US

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid

<sup>35</sup> Send International, *Christian Missions*, <http://www.send.org/kazakhstan/index.htm>

<sup>36</sup> Send International, *Christian Missions*, <http://www.send.org/kazakhstan/climate.htm>

Embassy Report as Christian groups is not Christian at all. Probably the most accurate report available to us today can be found on the Joshua Project. Joshua Project defines Evangelical as followers of Christ who generally emphasize: “(1) The Lord Jesus Christ as the sole source of salvation through faith in Him (2) Personal faith and conversion with regeneration by the Holy Spirit (3) A recognition of the inspired Word of God as the only basis for faith and living (4) Commitment to Biblical preaching and evangelism that brings others to faith in Christ.”<sup>37</sup> Based on the definition, Joshua Project gives a figure of known Evangelicals a percentile of unknown” and Christian adherents as .10 percent; therefore, we can only conclude that known Evangelical Believers will fall somewhere in between these two projections.”<sup>38</sup>

### Challenges

The challenges mission groups will experience are many, serious consideration should be given to this fact; the Kingdom of God is one that is at war and in conflict. Keeping this in mind we will identify some of the more world based challenges and barriers a mission group will almost always encounter. One thing that is emphasized by Moreau, Corwin and McGee in *Introducing World Missions*, chapter ten, is missionary preparation; more specifically: how can a missionary prepare for cross-cultural ministry prior to going to the field.”<sup>39</sup> Training in the following areas: spiritual and other character traits; ministry and professional skills, specialized knowledge; social skills, local language courses; obtainment of a missionary mentor/local informants and adoption of a learner’s posture are some things that can be accomplished to avoid

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<sup>37</sup> Joshua Project, *Definitions and Terms Related to the Great Commission*, <http://www.joshuaproject.net/definitions.php#evangelical>

<sup>38</sup> Joshua Project, *Kazakh of Kazakhstan Ethnic Profile*, <http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php?rop3=104791&rog3=KZ>

<sup>39</sup> Scott A. Moreau, Gary R. Cowin, and Gary B. McGee, *Introducing World Missions: A Biblical, Historical, and Practical Survey*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic 2004) 172-189.

many of the potential challenges.<sup>40</sup>

Eventually the opportunity to share the gospel will come and one obvious barrier is the language barrier. According to Hesselgrave's "three-culture" model of missionary communication found in *Perspectives*, the translation of scripture goes through a process where it needs to be decoded and encoded before it can be used in another culture.<sup>41</sup>

Bonding is another challenge a mission group must overcome. The foreignness of the mission group makes evangelism difficult. The Brewsters in *Perspectives* give some very basic ideas such as: establishing a sense of belonging, learning how insiders organize life, living amongst the local population, immersion in local relationships and creating awareness of the better risk of bonding.<sup>42</sup>

### Present Strategies

The current strategies being used in Kazakhstan are diversified and many. Here are some of the strategies currently being used: tent making, indigenous church planting with emphasis on enculturation, the people movement approach, the spontaneous multiplication of churches-discipling principles, the organic church strategy, church planting, evangelization of whole families, insider movements, short term mission trips and many more.

A strategy is good but many times it seems as if the specific strategy that frontier missionaries developed were results of specific and particular people, environments, cultures, worldviews and many other factors. The best and predominant strategy is this: obedience and

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<sup>40</sup> Moreau, Cowin, and McGee, *Introducing World Missions*, 175-186.

<sup>41</sup> Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne, rev. ed. *Perspectives: On the World Christian Movement: A Reader*, (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library 2009) 427-428.

<sup>42</sup> Winter and Hawthorne, *Perspectives*, 466-469.

sensitivity to the wooing of the Holy Spirit.

### **Proposed Strategy**

#### **Approach for Accessing the Country**

Because of the current religious tolerance enjoyed in Kazakhstan I would formulate a missionary team from one location. The team would train in local language courses, mentor with missionary mentors and local informants prior to our departure for Kazakhstan. Currently, there is a tremendous need for: English teachers, orphanage directors, industrial supervisors, and these potential needs should certainly not be overlooked as possible contributory ways to access our team into Kazakhstan under a semi-tent making platform. The time our missionary team spends together training would build unity and identify potential flaws in personnel or team prior to going on the field. Financial backing would be obtained through committed churches and administratively funneled through a mission board specializing in our specific desired missionary work. Most importantly, once the team members, churches and mission board are identified, continued seeking and prayer for the guidance and power from the Holy Spirit is extremely vital and without it the mission work cannot succeed.

#### **Evangelism and Church Planting Strategy**

When deliberation for a mission strategy is made consideration of many affluent factors should be focused upon. These factors would include: social, economical, cultural, ethnicity, customs and many others which will ultimately effect how a mission group will prepare and establish strategies for mission development and evangelism. Due to the numerous potential influential factors we will concentrate primarily upon ethnicity and cultural factors. Ethnicities, cultures and customs are unique to each people group and the Middle Asian Kazakh people

groups have their own unique and considerable features. Fixated upon the overall historical view of the Kazakh people; we see they started out as nomadic and loose knit hordes. During the Russian domination the Kazakhs were forced to become urbanized; thus, we have a diverse blend of rural and urbanized works to consider. To truly understand the Kazakhs we must be willing to totally immerse ourselves in the Kazakh people's worldview and culture. Learning the culture and becoming more "Kazakh like" will increase our acceptability and decrease our foreignness to the Kazakh people.

In Winter and Hawthorne's, *Perspectives*, they define worldview as: "a system of beliefs which are reflected in his actual values and behavior." They also define cultures as: "the "super-glue" which binds people together and gives them a sense of identity and continuity that is almost impenetrable."<sup>43</sup> Finalizing and determining the specific cultural aspects needed we should focus upon a specific sub-group in which we will choose to minister to. Though I have taken great pains to outline a clear and accurate order of steps involved in defining a people group this is one of the most crucial necessities in mission team development.

We will now look at the Kazakh people who are characterized, not as an individualistic society, but as a collective society. Collectivists are defined as those who: "focus on community and society, and seek to give priority to group goals over individual goals."<sup>44</sup> The Kazakh people being from a collective type society are not direct but indirect, with high context and polychronic timing, in their communicative interactions. This information is especially important to our mission group because these factors need to be considered prior to any

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid, 398-399.

<sup>44</sup> Wikipedia, *The Free Encyclopedia: Article on Collectivism*, <http://encyclopedia.thefreedictionary.com/collectivism>

communicative and evangelistic strategy development.

Folk religion, animism and ancestor worship, is moderate among the Kazakhstan culture and should be weighed prior to selecting an evangelistic outreach, this will help avoid any syncretism possibilities. “Today, the Kazakh continue to consult shamans (priests who cure the sick by magic, communicate with the spirits, and control events).”<sup>45</sup> History notably documents the transition of the Kazakh people to Islam was made very easily because they already worshipped the mono-god Taingir.

Looking at the strategies currently being used in Kazakhstan it would be sensible to follow this already successful mode of church planting. “Kazakhstan is the only state in Central Asia that does not give Islam special status” and the 1995 constitution makes provisions for religious tolerance.<sup>46</sup> There is also room for other strategies within the Kazakhstan borders such as: discipling principles and insider movements. Considering the diversity of the Kazakhs and the openness of the Kazakhstan government any of these strategies could successfully be employed in a given situation.

For the sake of clarity we will focus on the strategy of Church Planting. Patterson defines church planting as “a rapid multiplication of indigenous churches that sweeps through a people group or population segment.”<sup>47</sup> Church planting is not a reflection of the hub strategy where there is one mother church and every extension is a repetitive of the mother church. Church planting is a networking strategy that gains it’s effectiveness through the principle of reproduction. In church planting the mother churches extend to daughter churches that

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<sup>45</sup> Joshua Project, “Kazakh of Kazakhstan Ethnic Profile  
<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php?rop3=104791&rog3=KZ>

<sup>46</sup> Cheng, *Cultures of the World: Kazakhstan*, 71.

<sup>47</sup> Winter and Hawthorne, *Perspectives*, 647.

reproduce to granddaughter and great-granddaughter churches and so on. Winter describes it like this, “like a grain of wheat, each new church in a chain has the same potential to start the reproduction over again.”<sup>48</sup> Applying this principle to the indigenous people in Kazakhstan would be like this: a church plant would take place in a strategic location, local leadership would be attracted, trained local Christians would eventually assume the leadership roles within the church. This indigenous led church would interrelate with other local population segments that would reproduce into another indigenous locally led church that would complete the same cycle. The beauty of this strategy, as earlier stated, each church is uniquely led by local leadership; thus, retaining its unique ethnic identity.

When setting up the church planting strategy several important considerations are to be kept in mind. George Patterson makes the following comment: “the modern Western missionary’s most common sin is controlling the national churches.”<sup>49</sup> It is of vital importance that the local culture be permitted to retain their unique identity when building an indigenous church. The missionary’s job is to bring the Kazakh people to a saving knowledge of Christ: the Holy Spirit’s job is to regenerate individuals; and develop, increase, and formulate that indigenous church.

Church planting has been successfully used for a number of years with tremendous results. For increased success, in church planting, other strategies can be employed in conjunction with it; such as, discipling and organic church strategies. We will look at these two strategies and make application towards their conjunctive use within the church planting strategy model.

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid, 642.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, 641.

The organic church strategy simply stated is to bring Jesus into the people and the natural flow of missions (or in our case, church planting) will be a natural response. “Typically, we think of church as something to mobilize so people will come to Jesus. Instead, Jesus leads people in mission, who in turn bring forth fruitful churches.”<sup>50</sup> Neil Cole makes this observation: “In many of the churches of the West [with world in mind] ministry is done for Jesus, but not by Jesus—and therein lies a big difference.”<sup>51</sup> It is impossible to be successful in our church planting strategy without Jesus indwelling the people. His presence is life; His absence is death. He is the most essential portion of who and what we are.”<sup>52</sup>

Discipling is another strategy that can be used in conjunction with church planting. To have an effective indigenous church plant there would need to be some good discipleship training, adequately preparing local leaders with the needed capabilities for assuming church leadership. George Patterson gives some basic steps to take when discipling others. The first category is knowing and loving the people you disciple, with subcategories: 1) concentrate your responsibilities on one group; 2) let the church be of the people; and, 3) list what you will do to reproduce disciples among the people.<sup>53</sup> The second category is helping disciples build up other disciples, with subcategories: 1) build edifying relationships with the leaders you disciple; 2) encourage edifying teaching relationships between leaders and their disciples.<sup>54</sup> The third category is teaching obedience to Christ, with subcategories: 1) start right out with loving obedience to Jesus’ basic commands; 2) define evangelism and Theological education objectives

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid, 645.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, 644.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, 644.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, 634-636.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, 636-638.

in terms of obedience.<sup>55</sup> The fourth category is helping churches build up and multiply other churches with, with subcategories: 1) help each new church to reproduce; 2) show each new believer how to witness to friends and relatives and, 3) build edifying inter-church discipling relationships.<sup>56</sup>

### **Conclusion**

We have looked at the background information of the Kazakh people with the colorful history, the social problems, the economical changes, the social and economical issues and the religious aspects. Surveillance on current mission work, church status, challenges and strategies were noted. Lastly, we developed ideas for strategies we would employ if we were hypothetically preparing a mission team for ministry in Kazakhstan. Learning has been tremendous and will certainly be utilized in future Spirit led endeavors. If this paper had to be summarized to a few vital points, it would be this: we can (and should) do all that we are able towards preparation and equipping ourselves for the field; but, without His calling, guidance and empowerment it will not work.

I close with this powerful summarization written by David L. Watson and Paul D. Watson found in *Perspectives*, a writing entitled, *A Movement of God Among the Bhojpuri of North India*. Watson noted that six co-working missionaries had been martyred in the last eighteen months and he was ready to quit. Watson asked and received what he termed a new idea for the eventual conversion of over one million new believers and 40,000 new churches.<sup>57</sup> When his mission organization questioned his success and sought the source this is what they

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid, 638-640.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid, 640-641

<sup>57</sup> Ibid, 700.

found. “Team leaders spent an average of three hours a day in personal prayer. After that they spent another three hours praying with their teams every day. One a week the leaders fasted and prayed. Their teams spent one weekend a month fasting and praying.”<sup>58</sup> The secret, the source, the Holy Spirit. Strategies, preparation and all the things I have learned are good and necessary; but oh, give me more of the power and enduement from on high!

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<sup>58</sup>

Ibid, 698.

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