

You have the opportunity to impact the Turkey/Balkans. Are you up for the challenge?

Anatolian Alevi



*"It is **too small a thing** for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth."*
— Isaiah 49:6—

Map of Alevi population in Turkey



The majority of Alevi are ethnically Turkish, Kurdish, and Zaza. They are an unorthodox Muslim sect that stresses love of God and man over adherence to Islamic Law. They don't go to the mosque, preferring to worship in their own worship places called "cemevi" (assembly houses).

Alevism is an open minded, non-orthodox, liberal local Islamic tradition, whose adherents follow the mystical teachings of Ali, the Twelve Imams and a descendant—the 13th century Alevi saint Haji Bektash Veli. Alevi are found primarily in Turkey among ethnic Turks and Kurds, and make up somewhere between 15 and 20% of Turkey's population, they are the second-largest sect of Islam in Turkey, with Sunni Islam being the largest.

Quick Facts

Population: 15,000,000 - 20,000,000

Global Pop: 15,000,000 - 20,000,000

Progress: Unengaged

Language: Turkish, Kurdish, Zaza



Opportunities to Engage

The relationship between Alevi and Sunni is one of mutual suspicion and prejudice dating back to the Ottoman period. Hundreds of Alevi were murdered in sectarian violence in the years that preceded the 1980 coup, and as late as the 1990s dozens were killed with impunity. While pogroms have not occurred since them, President Erdogan has declared “a cemevi is not a place of worship, it is a center for cultural activities. Muslims should only have one place of worship.”

Alevi claim that they have been subject to intolerant Sunni "nationalism" that has been unwilling to recognize Alevi "uniqueness."

There is a high degree of overlap among the Kurds, Zazas and Alevi groups. Although there are individuals and organizations that are interested in seeing the Kurds, Zazas and Alevi reached, the current effort is completely inadequate to reach these three groups. Geographic, political, linguistic and spiritual complexities have made efforts to reach the Kurds, Zazas and Alevi hard to initiate and sustain. Current ways Alevi are being engaged include music, business, and teaching. There is no one dominant strategy that is “working” and this is a group mainly neglected by workers and organizations.

“To those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia (all are in modern Turkey), who are chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure.”

— 1 Peter 1:1-2 —

Prayer Points

- Access to the Eastern part of Turkey where the majority of Alevi are located is constant struggle or obstacle. Pray that we would get invited to these areas and allowed to stay by the government.
- Pray against apathy and disinterest towards the Gospel. Many Alevi do not feel the need to learn anything new, there is a pride that says, “No thank you, I am all good.”
- There are very few to almost no long term workers focusing solely on Alevi in Turkey. Pray that God would call workers to come and come specifically for the Alevi.
- Alevi have a deep love for music. Almost all of their theology and beliefs are not written down, they are passed from generation to generation through song. Pray that God would send musicians, lyrics, and even musical notes that would sing His praises and turn a nation to Himself!



Is God calling you to live among the Muslim peoples of the Turkey/Balkans?

Contact us.
We would love to help you get there!