



Macedonia

Republic of Macedonia

Europe

Geography

Area 25,713 sq km. Landlocked state surrounded by Serbia/Kosovo, Bulgaria, Greece and Albania.

Population	Ann Gr	Density
2010	2,043,360	0.08%
2020	2,045,824	0.00%
2030	2,016,164	-0.20%

Capital Skopje 524,000. **Urbanites** 67.9%. **Pop under 15 yrs** 18%. **Life expectancy** 74.1 yrs.

Peoples

Ethnic populations are a politicized issue, and despite census data, are difficult to enumerate accurately.

Slavic 64.9%. Macedonian 61.6%; Bosnian 0.9%; Serb 1.6%.

Albanian 25.2%.

Other 9.9% Romani(2) 5.2%; Turk 3.9%; Other 0.8%.

Literacy 96.1%. **Official language** Macedonian, one of the southern Slavic languages. **All languages** 10. **Languages with Scriptures** 3Bi 3NT 4por 1w.i.p.

Economy

One of the poorest regions of former Yugoslavia. Mostly reliant on agriculture and an increasingly obsolete industrial sector. High unemployment and low standard of living have spurred a significant exodus, especially of the young and talented, to the EU, North America and even New Zealand.

HDI Rank 72nd/182. **Public debt** 20.8% of GDP. **Income/person** \$4,657 (10% of USA).

Politics

Macedonia, having been contested throughout history by many powers, still endures claims by

neighbouring powers. A multiparty democracy. Macedonia has endured some tensions due to the unrest associated with the Albanian population of the region (in Albania, Kosovo, etc). But the most notable political issue is Macedonia's candidacy for the EU and NATO. In both cases, Greece holds veto power and blocks Macedonia from joining over its insistence on using the name "Republic of Macedonia". Greece resents the use of such a term due to possible territorial aspirations for a Greater Macedonia which would encompass the part of Greece also named Macedonia as well as parts of several other countries in the region.

Religion

The dominant Macedonian Orthodox Church actually emerged from the Serbian Orthodox Church, and tensions persist over this issue. Although there is some discrimination against newer religious groups (in particular, regarding building permissions), the religious communities are leading the way in the area of reconciliation and dialogue. The most recent religion law was passed mostly in order to prevent the Serbian Orthodox Church from gaining legal status.

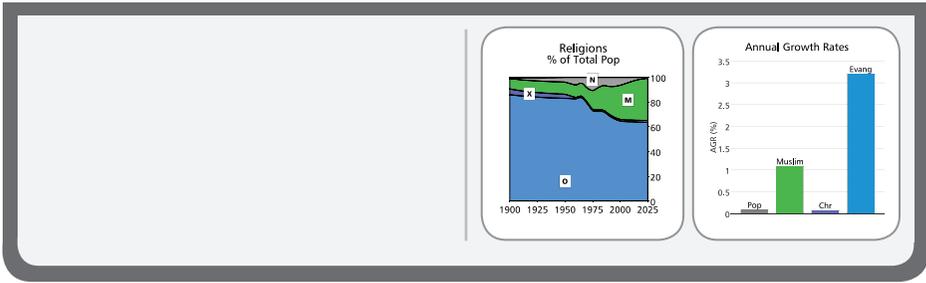
Religions	Pop %	Population	Ann Gr
Christian	65.50	1,338,401	0.1%
Muslim	31.00	633,442	1.1%
Non-religious	3.49	71,313	-6.7%
Jewish	0.01	204	0.1%

Christians	Denoms	Pop %	Affiliates	Ann Gr
Protestant	7	0.26	5,000	2.7%
Independent	5	0.04	1,000	4.9%
Anglican	1	0.01	<200	0.0%
Catholic	2	0.98	20,000	0.0%
Orthodox	7	64.10	1,310,000	0.1%
Marginal	1	0.11	2,000	-0.9%

Churches	MegaBloc	Congs	Members	Affiliates
Macedonian Orth Ch	O	1,150	850,340	1,250,000
Other Orthodox	O	21	40,382	61,800
Catholic Church	C	26	12,903	20,000
Methodist Ch	P	15	567	1,700
Evangelical Ch (Pente)	P	8	1,056	1,500
Seventh-day Adventist	P	19	750	1,155
Other denominations[11]		47	2,051	4,260
Total Christians[23]		1,286	908,049	1,338,415

TransBloc	Pop %	Population	Ann Gr
Evangelicals			
Evangelicals	0.2	4,270	3.2%
Renewalists			
Charismatics	0.1	3,010	3.8%
Pentecostals	0.1	2,090	3.9%

Missionaries from Macedonia
P,I,A 10 (long-term).



Answers to Prayer

1 The evangelical church in Macedonia is one of the fastest growing in Europe and displays growing unity across its theological breadth. Churches are ambitious in their outreach and church planting goals, and they minister across ethnic and national boundaries to share the gospel with their neighbours, a remarkable feat given the Balkanization of the region.

Challenges for Prayer

1 Macedonia's ethnic composition dominates its political and social existence, where segregation is more prevalent than harmony. The large (and growing) Albanian minority feel more connected with their own kind in Albania and Kosovo than with the other ethnicities of Macedonia. Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia also have agendas for Macedonia. Economic difficulties cause significant emigration and urban pull; many of the 2,000 villages are dwindling or disappearing altogether. Pray for wisdom for the government, and pray that the divided communities might find ways to build their nation together.

2 The Macedonian Orthodox Church claims to represent almost two-thirds of the population, but more than 1,000 churches remain largely empty, and most Macedonians are secular and unreligious in practice. The Macedonian government effectively endorsed this Church's hegemony by imprisoning the local bishop of the Serbian Orthodox Church, from which the Macedonian Orthodox illegitimately split. The Orthodox Church sometimes opposes new religious expressions such as evangelicalism, but dialogue is increasing. Pray for new life to touch this Church and all those who belong to it.

3 The evangelical witness is small, but growing. Almost every Protestant/Independent expression of faith is active and increasing. Even so, there are fewer than 100 evangelical congregations. Pray for the many challenges of and opportunities for the Church:

- a) **Opposition.** The label of "cult" persists, but is slowly fading for evangelicals. Obstructive tactics by the government often hold back the church from building the facilities needed to host the growing congregations. Pray for favour from the government and a humble attitude from the Church.
- b) **Unity.** Expressions of oneness in Christ are increasing, including pastors' prayer summits and networks, citywide worship events, and even websites focused on the issue. Pray that believers might press into true unity and that Christians' love for one another might attract many to Christ.
- c) **Church planting, evangelism and mission.** Macedonian believers "punch above their weight" in terms of outward-focused ministry. Many congregations look to reproduce and so deliberately move into cities and neighbourhoods previously unevangelized. House churches are a great part of this focus. Pray for a grassroots movement that sees the numbers of Macedonian believers rapidly multiply. Indigenous groups such as Macedonian Mission to the Balkans (reaching all ethnicities in the southern regions of the former Yugoslavia) are impacting Macedonia as well as neighbouring countries.

d) **Training and discipleship.** The first (non-Orthodox) theological school in the country is being planned – Macedonia Bible Seminary is aiming to open by autumn 2010. In the meantime, ministries such as **SEND**, **YWAM** and **SGA** all focus on raising up mature and biblically literate believers. Generally, multiple small congregations increase the need for leaders, yet are a better structure in which to disciple Christians.

4 The ethnic minorities are numerous, and all are in need of ministry.

a) **Albanians** represent 25% of Macedonia's population, and their numbers are rapidly increasing through birth rates and immigration. Greater tensions between Albanians – with their demands for increasing political influence – and the majority of Macedonians seem inevitable, but neither group desires the upheaval suffered in neighbouring Kosovo. Almost all Macedonian Albanians are unevangelized Muslims, but there is an openness to loving witness. Thus far, there are no groups of Christians from a Macedonian Albanian background.

b) **The Romani population** is chronically poor, oppressed, uneducated, unemployed and captive to a blend of Islam and folk superstitions. Sutka, near Skopje, is home to many of Macedonia's 80,000 Romani and is one of the largest Romani communities in the world. **YWAM**, **Pioneers**, the **Methodists**, **Pentecostals** and **Baptists** are all seeing fruit among the Romani.

c) **The Turkish community** lives mainly in eastern Macedonia. There are a handful of believers, but no evangelical church among them. A few groups are now engaged in outreach to them.

5 Foreign missions find Macedonia to be one of Europe's neediest lands, responsive yet difficult. **Worldshare**, **IMB**, **Pioneers**, **Frontiers**, **AoG**, **CMA**, the **Nazarenes** and **Partners International** actively conduct ministry alongside indigenous ministry organizations. Pray also for the ministry of **Exodus/IFES**; many new converts are young people.

6 Media and literature are important ministries in Macedonia.

a) **The Bible Society** oversees the distribution of two new Macedonian translations of the Bible – one translation by a partnership of **SGA**, **IVP** and a local translation team, the other a collaboration between Orthodox and Protestants. The **Gideons** are the largest distributors of Scripture, giving out many NTs. The **Bible League** distributes Bibles and other literature, and conducts seminars for local churches.

b) **A Christian Cultural Centre** in Skopje includes a Christian bookstore (**SGA**), although only a few books have been translated into Macedonian. Pray for more Christian material to be developed and distributed in Macedonian, especially material chosen or written by Macedonian believers – **PI** and **Exodus(IFES)** have a vision for this. **Revelation Bookshop** has published 40 titles in Macedonian.

c) **Broadcasting.** **TWR** Serbia broadcasts 30 minutes/week in Macedonian and **Smile/Evangelical Church Negotina** broadcasts locally. There is a great need for good Christian radio and TV programmes and broadcasting in Macedonian and Albanian.

d) **The JESUS film** has been widely viewed on television and film. It is available in Albanian, Macedonian, Romani and Turkish.