

Spiritual Situation Summary

Who sinned, the Balkan peoples or their ancestors, that the region is engulfed in bitter fighting? If the Balkan peoples were suffering on account of national, ancestral, or even original sin, then we Americans should be similarly distressed over sins against Indians, Africans, unborn children, and God. Does American peace and prosperity mean that our sins aren't as bad?

Jesus said about the tragedy of a blind man, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life." As the redemptive power of God was put on display in the life of a man born blind, so it is on display in the Balkans through Christian relief and development agencies. Jesus went on to say, "As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me" (Jn 9:4-5). God's glory can be displayed through us as well, when we support his work in the Balkans with prayer and giving. Jesus said, "You are the light of the world." Isaiah wrote that our light would break forth like the dawn when we share our food with the hungry, provide shelter for the wanderer, and clothe the naked (Is 58:6-8).

Current conflicts and, hence, ministry opportunities on the Balkan Peninsula are driven by the clashing of three great civilizations. In *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order*, Samuel P. Huntington says, "In the post-Cold War world, multiple communal conflicts have superceded the single superpower conflict. When these communal conflicts involve groups from different civilizations, they tend to expand and to escalate." Nowhere is the reality of multiple communal conflict more volatile and pronounced than in former Yugoslavia, where Western Christian, Orthodox Christian, and Muslim civilizations converge; where cultural fault lines between Ottoman, Byzantine, and Holy Roman empires still endure.

No peacekeeping or ministry proceeds in the Balkans without encountering these civilizational affinities. Greece and Russia support the Serbs. Western Europeans support the Croats. Iran and Saudi Arabia send arms and finances to Bosnian and Albanian Muslims. Stemming genocide here, as opposed to worse genocide elsewhere, interests the United States because America depends on Middle Eastern allies to contain Saddam Hussein.

Although Christianity flourished in spite of persecution in Romania and Bulgaria, the rest of the Balkan Peninsula has been a spiritual wasteland. Pioneers estimates fewer



than fifty believers reside in the entire province of Montenegro. In Slovenia, evangelicals number less than one-fifth of one percent. Bosnia holds fewer than one thousand believers in a population over four million, and Serbia holds fewer than ten thousand among eight million. Evangelicals in Greece are fewer than two-tenths of one percent, and less than two percent of Greece's mainly Orthodox Christian population attends any church at all.

But the light is growing. Albania was once the darkest corner of Europe. As a self-professed atheistic state it brutally suppressed all religion. Ten years ago it had no churches and only six known believers. By 1999, Albania had 154 congregations and 7,500 believers. Though still less than one quarter percent of the population, that represents an annual growth rate of 100 percent!

Meanwhile, in Kosovo, among people of the same culture and language under Serbian domination, Christian growth was stagnant. Kosovar knowledge of Christianity came from stories of the Crusades and experience with Orthodox Serbs. When Kosovars fled Serbian atrocities, many discovered the difference between genuine faith and the cultural kind. They not only heard the gospel but they saw it in action through the ministry of relief agencies and Albanian congregations. Today the demand from inside Kosovo for workers to disciple, shepherd, and train new believers in newly established congregations is overwhelming missionary sending agencies.

Resource Contact Information

Resource	Contact Info
Jesus Video in Balkan Languages	1-800-560-8713 < www.jesusfilm.org >
Balkan Language Scripture Audio Tapes	1-760-745-8105 < www.gospelcom.net/asi >
Gospel Radio Broadcasting in Balkan Languages	1-719-548-7490 < www.wb2000.org >
Balkan Language Scriptures from: International Bible Society American Bible Society Scripture Gift Mission	1-800-524-1588 < www.gospelcom.net/ibs > 1-800-322-4253 < www.americanbible.org > 1-877-873-2746 < www.gospelcom.net/asgm >
Christian Books in Balkan Languages	1-717-738-0582 < www.multilanguage.com >
Unreached Peoples Ministry Tools and Information	1-303-730-4170 < www.calebproject.org >
Video "A Hope and a Future for Bosnia"	1-502-297-0006 < www.teamexpansion.org >

Missionary Agency Contact Information

Agency	Location/s	Contact Info
Ambassadors for Christ International	Croatia, Kosovo, Romania	1-770-980-2020 < www.afcinternational.org >
Campus Crusade for Christ Int'l	Albania	1-407-826-2800 < www.ccci.org >
Catholic Relief Services	all Balkan countries	1-800-736-3467 < www.catholicrelief.org >
CBI	Albania, Slovenia	1-720-283-2000 < www.cbi.org >
Christian Aid Mission	Albania, Croatia, Macedonia	1-800-977-5650 < www.christianaid.org >
Christian & Missionary Alliance	Bosnia, Macedonia, Serbia	1-719-599-5999 < www.cmalliance.org >
Frontiers	Albania, Kosovo	1-800 GO-2-THEM < www.frontiers.org >
Greater Europe Mission	all Balkan countries	1-800-GEM-4488 < www.gemusa.org >
Horizons International	Albania, Kosovo, Macedonia	1-303-442-3333, e-mail: horizons@iex.net
International Teams	Albania	1-800-323-0428 < www.iteams.org >
Mission Possible	Albania, Bulgaria	1-800-729-2425 < www.mp.org >
Mission to Unreached Peoples	Albania, Kosovo	1-888-847-6950 < www.mup.org >
New Beginnings Children's Home	Albania	01252-333233 (UK) < www.kingscare.org >
Operation Mobilization	Bosnia, Macedonia	1-770-631-0432 < www.usa.om.org >
Pioneers	Albania, Bosnia, Croatia	1-800-755-7284 < www.pioneers.org >
SBC - IMB	Albania, Bosnia, Kosovo	1-804-219-1000 < www.imb.org >
SEE Teams	Albania, Croatia	1-941-795-1314 < www.seeteams.com >
TEAM	Albania, Croatia	1-800-343-3144 < www.teamworld.org >
Team Expansion	Bosnia, Kosovo	1-502-297-0006 < www.teamexpansion.org >
Trans World Radio	Serbo-Croatian Broadcasts	1-800-456-7897 < www.twr.org >
UFM International	Bosnia, Kosovo	1-610-667-7660 < www.ufm.org >
World Relief	Refugee Resettlement	1-630-665-0235 < www.wr.org >
World Vision	Bosnia, Kosovo	1-888-511-6565 < www.wvi.org >