

MISSIONARY ATLAS PROJECT
EUROPE
Cyprus

Snapshot

Name:

conventional long form: *Republic of Cyprus*
conventional short form: *Cyprus*

Founded: 1960

Population: 788,457 (July 2007 est.)

Picture of Flag:



Map:



Religions

Greek Orthodox 78%;

Muslim 18%;
Maronite and Armenian Apostolic 4%

Ethnic Groups:

Greek 77%;
Turkish 18%,
other 5% (2001)

Government:

Republic and promises freedom of religion

Cyprus Country Profile

Basic Facts

Name:

conventional long form: *Republic of Cyprus*

conventional short form: *Cyprus*

local long form: *Kypriaki Dimokratia/Kibris Cumhuriyeti*

local short form: *Kypros/Kibris*

note: the Turkish Cypriot community, which administers the northern part of the island, refers to itself as the "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus" (TRNC)

Demographics

The population of Cyprus (Greek and Turkish zones) 788,457 (July 2007 est.)

An estimated 11.6% of the population is 65 years of age or older. Also, an estimated 68% of the population is between the ages of 15-64 years of age. The population growth rate is estimated at 0.53% during the year of 2006. The birth rate in Cyprus is 12.56 births for 1,000 people. The death rate is at 7.68 deaths for 1,000 people according to the statistics during 2006.

The ethnic groups that are present in Cyprus are Greek (77%), Turkish (18%), and others that comprise about 5% which is based on statistics taken during 2001. Nicosia, the capital city, located near the center of the island, had a 2000 population of 178,000. The other main cities that have heavy population in Cyprus are Limassol, Famgusta, Larnaca, Paphos, and Kyrenia.

Language

After independence in 1960, Greek and Turkish became the official languages. Since 1974, Greek has been the language of the southern part of Cyprus and Turkish as the language of the northern part of Cyprus. English is also used extensively.

Society/Culture

Cypriots take great pride in their rich history and culture. The Church of Cyprus still is very important to its people even if they do not attend church regularly. There is almost a weekly celebration of some sort saint, wedding, or festival. There are many religious holidays that are celebrated, but the Greek Orthodox Easter is by far the most important. On Easter Saturday, you can find Greek Cypriots attending midnight mass. One can find a bonfire with an effigy of Judas and a fireworks celebration in front of the church. On Easter Sunday, families gather together and eat the traditional roasted lamb for lunch.

Cypriots also celebrate the onset of spring with festivals and carnival parades in all of the major Cypriot towns. There are flower festivals with parades of flower-covered floats. The largest carnival is in Limassol, with its many floats, parades and other entertainment. There is also another festival celebrated called festival of the flood or it is also called Kataklysmos. The Cypriots celebrate it by throwing open-air games and competitions in every town. Harvest time is time for the wine festivals, the largest being held in Limassol. Every year thousands of visitors go to the festival to enjoy the large range of food and wine on offer.

The family is very important to Cypriot values and is the center of the social structure. Many Cypriot families do only include their direct family members in their homes, but also their extended families such as grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins, and so on. Families are expected to help each other out and do not abandon each other. Grandchildren tend to be close to their grandparents, including their maternal and paternal grandparents. Elders are respected and children are expected to take care of their parents when they become old or sick.

Cypriots are extremely respectful of hierarchy, which can be traced back to their two main religions, Islam in Turkish Cyprus and Greek Orthodox in Greek Cyprus. People are respected because of their age and position. Older people are viewed as wise and are granted respect. The oldest person in a group is revered and honored. In a social situation, they are served and introduced first.

The majority of Greek Cypriots belong to the Greek Orthodox Church. The Church of Cyprus is one of the oldest autocephalous churches and recognizes the ecumenical patriarch in Constantinople and retains administrative autonomy under its own archbishop. In small villages, women attend services more frequently than men, and elderly family members are usually responsible for fulfilling religious duties on behalf of the whole family. Church attendance is less frequent in cities and among educated Cypriots. For much of the population, religion centers on rituals at home, veneration of icons, and observance of certain feast days of the Orthodox calendar.

Source: <http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/cyprus-country-profile.html>,
<http://www.cyprusexplorer.com/history.htm>

Government

The 1960 constitution of the Republic of Cyprus respects the two existing ethnic communities, Greek and Turkish, by providing specifically for representation from each community in the government. The president must be Greek and the vice-president is Turkish. Under the constitution, these officers are elected for five years by universal suffrage by the Greek and Turkish communities, respectively; each has the right of veto over legislation and over certain decisions of the Council of Ministers, a body composed of seven Greek and three Turkish ministers, designated by the president and vice-president jointly.

Legislative authority is vested in the 50-member House of Representatives, elected by the two chief communities in the proportion of 35 Greek and 15 Turkish. In January 1964, following the outbreak of fighting, Turkish representatives withdrew from the House, and temporary constitutional provisions for administering the country were put into effect.

The current Cypriot president, Tassos Papadopoulos, won the presidential elections just weeks before the spring 2003 UN peace plan deadline. On the eve of the May 2004 EU entry date, Mr. Papadopoulos urged the Greek Cypriot community to vote no in the referendum on the UN's 11th hour revised settlement plan. He insisted that the deal for Greek Cypriots returning to their former homes in the north was not good enough.

Mehmet Ali Talat of the center-left Republican Turkish party won a convincing victory in Turkish Cypriot presidential elections in April 2005. Unlike his veteran predecessor, Rauf Denktash who retired after leading the Turkish Cypriot community for three decades, he would like to see reunification and membership of the EU for the whole island.

Source: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/country_profiles/1016541.stm#

Economy

The Greek Cypriot economy is considered to be strong and stable, especially after joining the European Union. Cyprus is considered to be one of the most successful countries economically that is on the Mediterranean Sea. It strives heavily on the income it makes from tourism. It has a small manufacturing and agricultural industry, but its main source of economic stability is through the avenue of tourism sector.

After the Turkish invasion, the Cypriot economy suffered because the island was split in half and both sides lost important parts of the island that would benefit the Greek and Turkish sides. The invasion affected agriculture, tourism, mining, and quarrying. The following statistics reflect this loss: 70 percent of the island's rich producing resources were lost, the tourist industry lost 65 percent of its hotels and tourist accommodations, the industrial sector lost 46 percent, and mining and quarrying lost 56 percent of production. The Turkish Cypriots have suffered much economically since they are only recognized by Turkey and other foreign investors do not want to take the risk of investing on the Turkish side of the island.

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economy_of_Cyprus

Literacy

Cyprus is considered to have a highly educated population. According to the CIA world fact book, about 97 percent of the Cypriot population is literate as of 2003, 98.9 percent are males and 96.3 percent are females.

According to the constitution of 1960, education was offered separately in Greek and Turkish schools for the Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots respectively. Education is mandatory up to the age of twelve. Primary school lasts for six years and then secondary education, which is equivalent to high school, lasts for six years.

There are a plethora of universities to choose from and some are actually completely taught in English.

Land/Geography

Cyprus is the third largest island in the Mediterranean Sea after Sicily and Sardinia. Its full area, including small island outposts of Cape Andreas known as the Klidhes, is 3,571 square miles. Its approximate size is about three fourths the size of the state of Connecticut.

Currently the island is split, 1,300 square miles comprises the Turkish Cypriot side and the Greek Cypriot side occupies about 2,272 square miles of the island. A narrow zone called the "green line," patrolled by UN forces, separates the two regions and divides Nicosia, the national capital.

There are few lakes and rivers on the island. Rivers are little more than rocky channels that carry away torrents during the thaw of spring and early summer. There are two mountain systems that run through the island, the Troodos Massif and the Kyrenia Mountains.

The climate of Cyprus is for the most part dry and sunny. Since it is in the Mediterranean Sea, it is humid during the summers and its winters tend to be mild. The average annual temperature is approximately 68 degrees Fahrenheit. A cool rainy season lasts from November to March. In winter, snow covers the higher peaks of the Troodos; elsewhere the temperature seldom falls below freezing, and conditions are mild and bracing. It is not uncommon to see earthquakes on the island.

Source: WORLDMARK: Encyclopedia of the Nations, Asia & Oceania, tenth edition.

History

Although Cyprus is a small country, it has a vast and long history. Many empires of the world have left their marks on the small island of Cyprus. When one visits Cyprus, one can see the marks of the past 9000 years of ancient history.

The earliest findings in Cyprus can be dated back all the way to 7000 B.C., the Neolithic Age, with settlements found along the north and south coasts of the island. After 1400 B.C., the Greeks came to the island, Mycenaen merchants, who began the Hellenisation of the island.

By 1050 B.C., Cyprus is considered to be a Greek island with the Greek culture, language, and religion flourishing all over the island. It was considered to be an important trading post between the empires of Europe, Africa, and the Middle East.

From 570 B.C. Cyprus was conquered by several other empires including the Assyrians, the Egyptians, and the Persians. In 333 B.C., Alexander the Great conquers Cyprus and claims part of it for his empire and Cyprus remains to be part of the Hellenistic Empire until the year 58 B.C. Rome conquers Cyprus in 58 B.C. and kept the place in relative peace and security until the 7th century, when the Byzantines and the Muslims started fighting over the control of Cyprus.

In 1191 AD, Cyprus falls under the control of Richard the Lion heart. He then sells the island to the Knights Templar, who resell it to Guy de Lusignan. From 1192 to 1489, Cyprus is ruled under a feudal system and Catholicism becomes the official religion. The Venetians took over in 1489, but were later kicked out by the Ottoman Empire in 1571, which kept Cyprus for 300 years before giving the island to the hands of the British. When the Ottomans took over, Islam was introduced to them and Catholicism was expelled. The Greek Orthodox Church was then restored during that time.

The Cypriots fought against colonial rule in 1955, and then were granted independence in 1960. In 1974, caused by division within the government, Turkey invaded the island. The country was then divided and remains divided until this day into the Greek side and the Turkish side. The Greek Government-sponsored attempt to seize control of Cyprus was met by military intervention from Turkey, which soon controlled more than a third of the island. In 1983, the Turkish-held area declared itself the "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus" (TRNC), but it is recognized only by Turkey.

The latest two-year round of UN-brokered talks - between the leaders of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities to reach an agreement to reunite the divided island - ended when the Greek Cypriots rejected the UN settlement plan in an April 2004 referendum. The entire island entered the EU on 1 May 2004, although the EU acquis - the body of common rights and obligations - applies only to the areas under direct government control, and is suspended in the areas administered by Turkish Cypriots. However, individual Turkish Cypriots able to document their eligibility for Republic of Cyprus citizenship legally enjoy the same rights accorded to other citizens of European Union states. Nicosia continues to oppose EU efforts to establish direct trade and economic links to north Cyprus as a way of encouraging the Turkish Cypriot community to continue to support reunification.

In 1963 Turkish-Cypriot ministers withdraw from the Government in protest at proposed changes to the Constitution and Turkey threatens to invade. In 1974 the Greek junta instigates a coup in Cyprus against the Cypriot Government and Turkey uses that as an excuse and invades the island. In 2003, the United Nations tried to hold talks on the island's reunification, but the Greek Cypriots were not favor of this plan. The Greek side of the island has joined the European Union, while the Turkish side continues to struggle economically while the country of Turkey

remains loyal to Turkish Cyprus. The people of Cyprus would one day like to see their island reunited and live in peace together.

Source: <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/worldguide/destinations/europe/cyprus/essential?a=culture>

Christian History

Its Christian history began with the visits of Paul, accompanied first (as described in the Acts of the Apostles) by Barnabas, and later by the apostle Mark. They were very influential in establishing a Christian foundation for the people. The Roman proconsul, Sergius Paulus, was even converted and was recognized as the first Roman of noble birth to convert to Christianity. He most likely was the first Christian governor of a Roman province.

For several centuries after AD 632, Cyprus underwent a series of Arab invasions. The island was wrested from its Byzantine ruler Isaac Comenus in 1191 by Richard I (the Lion-Hearted) during the Third Crusade. Sold by the English king to the Knights Templar, it was transferred by that order to Guy de Lusignan, under whose dynasty the island experienced a brilliant period in its history, lasting some 300 years. Conquered in 1489 by Venice, Cyprus fell to the Turks in 1571.

A large number of missionaries that live in Cyprus and many base themselves out of Cyprus since it is considered to be an open and free country. The Logos Bookstore provides a wide range of Christian books and materials.

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_history_of_Cyprus#Christianization, <http://www.unrv.com/provinces/cyprus.php>, WORLDMARK: Encyclopedia of the Nations, Asia & Oceania, tenth edition

Religion

Non-Christian

Islam

Islam came to the island when the Ottoman Empire arrived and took over the island. The Greek Orthodox Church was still very strong among the Greek community, but the Turkish side kept the tradition of Islam alive on the island. Most of the Muslims in Cyprus reside in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC).

The Turkish Cypriots mostly adhere to Islam and are of the Hanafi sect. The Turkish Cypriots are for the most part very nominal Muslims, but all celebrate the major Muslim holidays such as Aid Al-Adha, the feast of sacrificing a lamb, Aid Al-Fitar, the feast that commemorates the end of the month of Ramada, or the celebration of Muhammad's birthday. The five pillars of Islam are as follows: the proclamation of the Islamic confession, praying five

times a day, the giving of alms (*zakat*), going on the hajj to Mecca, and the fasting of the month of Ramadan.

Muslims make up around 24% of the population or some 182,000 persons.

Non-Religious

People numbered among the non-religious make up 2.9 % of the population or over 23,000 persons. This group is increasing at a rate of 2.3% annually

Jehovah's Witnesses

The Jehovah Witnesses in Cyprus number around 2000 in some 22 congregations. Adherents are estimated at over 3400.

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints

The Mormons have one church and just over 50 members in Cyprus

Catholic and Orthodox

Orthodox Churches

Three groups of Orthodox Churches claim 68% of the population or some 535,000 members. These groups are showing a small increase + 0.2% annually

Greek Orthodox

In the late 1990s, there was an estimated 78% of the population of Cyprus held to the Greek Orthodox tradition, while the rest were either Muslim (18%), Maronite, Armenian Apostolic, and other persuasions (4%). The Greek Orthodox Church on Cyprus reported over 380 congregations with membership of over 190,000. Religion is considered to be of a higher importance among the Greek Cypriots than on the Turkish side of Cyprus.

The Greek Orthodox also hold stronger political and cultural influences within the country. The independence of the Church of Cyprus was recognized by the Council of Ephesus in 431 AD and confirmed by Emperor Zeno in 478. The Great Schism, which is the split between the Catholic Church and Orthodox Church became known, had strong effects for the Church of Cyprus. Under Lusignan and Venetian rule, the Church of Cyprus had to subjugate themselves to the authority of the Roman pope. The imposed Roman hierarchy attempted to remold the Church of Cyprus in the image of the Western church.

Under the Muslim Ottomans, Cypriots were no longer considered schismatics, but merely unbelievers and followers of an inferior religion. As such they were allowed considerable autonomy, and the archbishop was the officially recognized secular as well as religious leader of his community.

Under the British, there was an attempt to secularize all public institutions, but this move was bitterly opposed by church authorities, who used the conflict with the state to gain leadership of the Greek nationalist movement against colonial rule. At independence Archbishop Makarios III, a young, Western-educated former monk, was elected president of the republic, holding this position until his death in 1977.

His successor, Archbishop Chrysostomos, was still head of the Church of Cyprus at the beginning of the 1990s. He was a conservative leader, both in religious and political matters, well-suited for a church that had never undergone reforms similar to those instituted by the Second Vatican Council for the Roman Catholic Church.

The church had long been composed of four episcopal sees: the archbishopric of Nicosia, and the metropolitanates of Paphos, Kition, and Kyrenia. New metropolitanates were created by Makarios in 1973 for Limassol and Morphou, with a suffragan, or assistant, bishop in Salamis under the archbishop. A bishop had to be a graduate of the Orthodox theological seminary in Greece and be at least thirty years of age.

Since Orthodox bishops were sworn to a vow of celibacy and parish clergy were usually married, bishops were recruits from monasteries rather than parish churches. Bishops were not appointed by the archbishop, but, like him, were elected through a system granting representation to laymen, other bishops, abbots, and regular clergy.

The monasteries of Cyprus had always been very important to the Church of Cyprus. By the twentieth century many had long lain in ruins, but their properties were among the most important holdings of the church, the island's largest landowner. Although the number of monks decreased in the postwar era, in the early 1990s there were at least ten active monasteries in the government-controlled areas.

In the Orthodox church, ritual was to a great extent the center of the church's activity, for Orthodox doctrine emphasizes the mystery of God's grace rather than salvation through works and knowledge. Seven sacraments are recognized: baptism in infancy, followed by confirmation with consecrated oil, penance, the Eucharist, matrimony, ordination, and the act of anointing or healing in times of sickness or when near death. Their church services are considered to be long and the presence of icons are forbidden, but the veneration of icons which can be found on church walls are accepted. Marriage is a highly ritualized and wedding sponsors play an important role in the family because they act as the godparents of children born of the unions they sponsored.

Religious observances vary depending on where people live. In rural villages, women are more likely to attend church and elderly family members are responsible for fulfilling religious duties on behalf of their family. Church attendance is lower in more urban areas on the island. For much of the population, religion centered on rituals at home, veneration of icons, and observance of certain feast days of the Orthodox calendar.

Source: [http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field\(DOCID+cy0044\)](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+cy0044)) ; *Operation World*.

Roman Catholic

The Roman Catholic Church in Cyprus exists in three groups and reports 12 congregations with over 4500 members.

Evangelical Christian Groups

Protestant and independent churches are growing in Cyprus. Churches known as protestant are increasing at + 0.8% annually while independent churches (some 15 groups) have a growth rate of +7.9% annually.

Anglican Church

The Anglican Church in Cyprus reports over 7 congregations and 1320 members.

Armenian Apostolic Church

The Armenian Apostolic Church is independent in Cyprus and has a membership of over 1300

Armenian Evangelical Church

Considered a protestant church, this group has 2 congregations with a combined membership of around 150.

Charismatic Churches/groups

Around 13 organizations of Charismatic Churches and groups report a total of 14 congregations with over 710 members.

Church of God Prophecy'

This protestant church reports 4 congregations and over 250 members

Apostolic Church of Jesus Christ

This independent church group reports 2 congregations with a membership of over 200.

The Greek Evangelical Church

This church group is considered protestant and has 2 congregations with around 140 members.

Christian Brethren

The Christian Brethren are considered protestant and have 1 congregation around 70 members.

Eleven other groups have 13 congregations and 590 members.

People Groups

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Americans (1,900)

Americans live in Cyprus for various business reasons or diplomatic reasons. They are considered to adhere to the Christian faith and there is a large evangelical international church with a large portion of Americans that attend it. However, a large portion of the American population in Cyprus are considered to be nominal Christians. Many of the Americans tend to live in neighborhoods that consist of an international population rather than live in Cypriot neighborhoods.

11471

Arab, Maronite (1,366)

The Maronite Arabs fled to Cyprus to escape religious persecutions about 700 years ago. They speak Maronite, but have been influenced by the Greek language over the years. They adhere to the Maronite Orthodox faith, but some have been converted to Islam over many years.

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Arab, Lebanese (16,000)

About 16,000 Lebanese live in Cyprus. Many Lebanese fled their homeland to escape the horrible civil war that plagued Lebanon for many years. They mainly adhere to the religion of Islam, but have Christian resources available to them in their language. A small number of evangelical believers live amongst this group.

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Armenian (21,000)

They have experienced a harsh time early in the 20th century when they were plagued by the Ottoman Empire and were experiencing an ethnic cleansing. Armenia gained independence in 1991, but economically many fled their country to find adequate employment and a better life for themselves. There are about 21,000 Armenians in Cyprus. Many adhere to the Orthodox faith. The number of evangelical believers, however, is increasing.

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Assyrian (100)

The Assyrian people are an ancient people that originates from countries such as Iraq and Iran. They belong to the Assyrian Church of the East. Under the Prophet Mohammad, they experienced a time of religious freedom, but later that was taken away from them and many were put to death for their Christian affiliation.

Under the Ottomans, it was as if they wanted to completely wipe them away. Many fled to various countries such as the United States of America and various countries in Western Europe. They are very proud of their heritage, faith, and language. They wanted their own country within Iraq, but were never granted that request.

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British (59,000)

There are about 59,000 British citizens that live in Cyprus seeking business opportunities or as diplomatic officials. Many adhere to the Christian faith, but many are nominal and are only Christian by tradition.

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Bulgarian (600)

There are a very small number of Bulgarians who live in Cyprus, but the ones that are in Cyprus are seeking employment opportunities and a better life for themselves and their families. Many adhere to the Christian tradition, but there are very few evangelical believers.

39296
Cypriots, Greek (683,147)

The Greek Cypriots occupy the southern part of Cyprus. They currently belong to the EU and experience a better life economically than the Turkish part of the country which lies in the northern part of Cyprus.

They primarily speak Greek and there are about 553,000 Greek Cypriots that live there. They adhere to the Greek Orthodox faith. There are very few evangelical believers among them.

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Cypriots, Turkish (Yoruk) (180,000)

The Turkish Cypriots descend from when the Turkish Ottomans invaded Cyprus for a time. They proudly adhere to Turkish customs, traditions, and language. They take up about 20% of the population of Cyprus and live in the northern part of Cyprus. They adhere to the Islamic faith and have very little number of evangelical believers.

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Jew, Greek (200)

The Jewish Greek population is not very big in Cyprus, but their primary language is Greek. They adhere to the Jewish faith, and there are very few, if any, evangelical believers among them in Cyprus.

46762
Roma (1,200)

The number of the Roma Gypsy in Cyprus are unknown since they are a group that travels and leaves one place so often. Roma people often taken on the host country's religion while preserving elements of their own belief system.

The number of evangelical believers among the Roma is actually growing across Europe. They are known for their nomadic lifestyle and their reputation for dishonesty, but they are trying to live more settled lives and to change their image to a positive one.

33639

Russian (21,230)

There are several thousand Russians that live in Cyprus. They have fled Russia to seek a better life for themselves and to provide for their families. They either do not have any religious affiliations or belong to the Russian Orthodox Church. They have evangelical Christian resources available to them.

Missiological Implications

1. Evangelical Christians and churches should pray that the Holy Spirit might overcome the apathy and nominalism in the churches on Cyprus. Traditional beliefs and practices help keep these churches from true outreach and evangelism.
2. Evangelical Christians and churches should teach methods of reaching Orthodox, Catholic, and Islamic peoples to Christ. Teachers of methods known to reach these groups should be sent to Cyprus to seek to help these believers win many to Christ.
3. Evangelical Christians and churches should pray for a healing of the breach between the northern Muslims and the southern Orthodox peoples.
4. Evangelical Christians and churches should seek to motivate the many missionaries and mission groups who have headquarters on Cyprus to begin evangelizing the people on Cyprus.
5. Evangelical Christians and Churches should emphasize evangelistic work among the minority peoples in Cyprus.

Pictures – See folder labeled Cyprus Pics.

Links –

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cyprus>

<http://www.visitcyprus.org.cy/>

<https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/cy.html>

<http://www.ucy.ac.cy/>

<http://www.cyprus.com/>

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/cytoc.html>

