

THE STONES OF CHANGE

In a predominantly Muslim country, Bek Ibrahim is making waves for the gospel.

Some men look at a river and see only the steady flow of water rippling downstream. Bek Ibrahim,* a Muslim-background believer from a Central Asian country, sees that his role is to be a rock in the riverbed of his country—one that is changing the spiritual flow toward Christ. With each new believer he disciples, the course of the current shifts

that much more. After 10 years of ministry in an unrelenting stream of spiritual opposition, Bek came to Denver Seminary for a season of rest, personal growth, and additional training.

Bek's country, while historically Muslim, was forced into atheism under Communist rule for nearly four generations. After the collapse of the USSR in 1991, there was a great spiritual hunger and openness throughout the country, met by eager missionaries from both the Christian church and Islam. In 1993, after just one evening of talking with Muslim missionaries, Bek's whole family said the Shahada—the Muslim profession of faith. Though he was barely a teenager at the time, Bek tried to learn how to be a Muslim and grow in his knowledge, but the atheist roots of his family were deep, and they still practiced Spiritism.

It was in the first year of university that he finally met a Christian. Initially, he liked to argue with Christians, but he quickly realized they were different. Islam touted a holiness



that he longed for, but never felt. However, he could see Christians were actually transformed by their faith, and he wanted that for himself. Just a few months after meeting that first Christian, Bek trusted Jesus as his Lord and Savior. He began to read the Bible and grew quickly in his knowledge of the Lord.

Several years later, Bek and his wife—both believers—became staff with Cru (formerly Campus Crusade for Christ), working on the very campus where he came to faith. Their fruitful campus ministry led to planting a church, but being a Christian in Bek's country is not easy.

Any spiritual openness has eroded over the last handful of years, and now it has all but evaporated with a 2012 law that all non-traditional churches must be registered and given a license to have services. There are only two religions recognized by the government, and evangelical Christianity isn't one of them.

Regardless of the challenges in ministry at home, Bek is eager to return. While this season of studying leadership at Denver Seminary has been a blessing of rest and preparation for the next phase of ministry, he is ready to get back to the work of spreading the good news and shaping the river's flow in his country.

**Name has been changed for confidentiality purposes.*

BEK IBRAHIM WILL RECEIVE HIS MASTER OF ARTS IN LEADERSHIP IN MAY 2017. HE THEN PLANS TO RETURN TO HIS MINISTRY OF CHURCH PLANTING AND DISCIPLE MAKING AMONG THE PREDOMINANTLY MUSLIM PEOPLES OF HIS CENTRAL ASIAN COUNTRY.