

Azerbaijan

Brief Introduction and Present Situation

Azerbaijan is located at the west of the Caspian Sea and is bordered by Russia to the north, Georgia to the northwest, Armenia to the west and Iran to the south. In 1991, Azerbaijan declared independence from the Soviet Union and became an independent state. Its population is about 9.99 million, and the official language is Azerbaijani (very similar to Turkish). Russian and English are the second/third languages and play important roles in education and communication. Due to the wealth brought about by crude oil, Azerbaijan's economic development and literacy rate are both high. The unemployment rate is very low.

Azerbaijan, like some Central and Western Asian countries, has been deeply influenced by the 70-year Soviet era's promotion of atheism. The authorities hold strict controls over all religions. The Constitution does not stipulate an official religion, and in fact professes religious freedom. Although most of the citizens are Muslims, they seem to merely adhere to the Islamic cultural practices rather than strictly follow the teachings of Islam. The capital Baku is a bustling, modern metropolis with a population of about 3 million. Walking on the streets of Baku, one rarely sees women with hijab. Restaurants offer all sorts of meat and alcohol just like those in the Western countries.

It is estimated that apart from the Orthodox Christians, there are only about 10,000 Christians including Catholics in the country. Mostly are Muslim converts. At present, there are some saints in the Lord's recovery and some seekers in Baku. There is an urgent need for more saints to coordinate in shepherding the seekers and to live a God-man living. It is easy for English-speaking university lecturers/professors to get a job here and be self-sufficient. In addition, Azerbaijan has put impetus to developing petrochemical industry, tourism, food and agricultural industries, etc. It welcomes foreign investment and does not

exercise foreign exchange controls.

Please pray for the Lord's testimony in Azerbaijan. May the Lord continue to open the door for the spread of the gospel of the kingdom to gain proper vessels in this country. May He also raise up saints who will receive the burden to come and coordinate for the propagation in Azerbaijan.

A Letter from Baku

After the International Chinese-speaking Conference in Taipei in February 2018, we received a burden from the Lord and through fellowship migrated to Baku, Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan was one of 12 countries in Asia that did not have the testimony of the Lord's Recovery.

We came by accepting a part-time teaching position at a small university. Azerbaijan is a safe and secure, westernized, and moderate Muslim nation. There is a modest Christian presence in this country. Recently the Lord has made a little move and four gates have been opened here: the campus, the Bible Society, the bookstore and our home. Much and thorough prayer is required for these opened doors that the sweeping Spirit may bring to us the lost coins, the materials for the building up of His house.

At the university they have asked us to help recruit English-speaking professors/lecturers from all subject areas to come and teach for a semester or two, or longer, beginning in the coming fall semester. Retired saints with teaching experience are especially welcomed. The work load is not too heavy, about 3-4 hours a day. The pay is not high but is sufficient to cover the cost of living here. Please send any inquiries to Brother Samuel Liu and we will contact you for fellowship and prayer. Contact information of Brother Samuel Liu — chenshiliugmail.com

The attitude of the government toward Christians has become more open. At this link you can view a brief report: <https://bit.ly/2WriaMP>



Bangladesh

The Church in Dhaka

Dhaka is the capital of Bangladesh and is located in the heart of the country. The Lord has been leading the church on through His speaking. Since July of last year, with the speaking released regarding the one new man, the saints in Dhaka began to pay more attention to the aspect of cherishing, blending, and mutually shepherding one another. In this way many saints have been strengthened. For example, a young sister who never attended the home meeting at her house began to open up to the saints and willingly joined the home meeting because the saints went shopping with her and blended with her in her daily living. Another sister who liked origami was gifted with origami made by the saints, and she and her family warmed up to the saints and became more open to the church.

The saints made use of every Friday, which was the weekly holiday, to prepare love feasts together. The food at the table whetted everyone's appetite and opened up their being for fellowship. The young people were thus encouraged and expressed willingness to pursue the Lord's word. Some saints frequently brought all kinds of homemade food to the meetings for the students. Young students were thereby shepherded and attended meetings regularly. In addition, by the saints organizing outdoor blending activities for the young people and children, the number of young ones attending the meetings has gradually increased. The young ones are also stabilized in the church life.

In October, the saints began to list the names of those who had not been meeting and made mention of them in prayer every day. During the week, these ones were shepherded by the saints; before each Lord's Day, they were invited to join the meeting. Some could not make it to the Lord's Table, so the saints delivered the meeting to their homes instead or invited them to join the home meetings. As a result, there was a 20% increase of the Lord's Day average attendance from September to October. At the same time, the saints listed the names of gospel friends and discussed specific approach for each person, fighting for them in prayer and coordinating in action. By this the Lord added four new ones to the church. Then in January of this year, four brothers got baptized, and immediately they coordinated with the saints to preach the gospel to their roommate. Eventually, this roommate also got saved and baptized and became a member of the Body.

In addition, some of the homes that the saints contacted have been meeting regularly. Among them was a relatively well-off



family. Due to economic reasons, this family needed to move. But they remained eager to meet with the saints. Praise the Lord! Our labor on men is not in vain. As long as there is steadfast shepherding, the Lord's word will transform and recover them, and cause their love toward the Lord to increase and abound.

May the Lord continue to gain the saints that they would be solidified in the church life through establishing organic relationships with one another. May the newly baptized ones be stably kept and come to know more of the truths in the Lord's recovery and have more subjective experiences of the Lord to become remaining fruits and functioning members of the Body.

The Church in Chittagong

Located in the southern part of Bangladesh, Chittagong is the second largest city and the largest port of the country. The Lord's work among the young saints in Chittagong is flourishing. In September last year, a brother and two sisters went north to participate in a week of truth perfecting training. They were deeply touched by the Lord's words and their spirits were on fire. When the two sisters returned, they led the sisters in the sisters' house into the practice which they learned from the training and shared their enjoyment with the saints. This encouraged all the saints.

In October, as the church continued in the burden for the young working saints by steadfastly making mention of their names in prayer, having love feasts for them on the weekends, and visiting and caring for them, some of them were gradually recovered. One of the sisters who resumed attending the Lord's Day meeting invited the saints to her home to preach the gospel to her husband and housemates. A brother was also recovered back to the Lord's Day meeting. Another brother prayed for his marriage because his father was ill and wanted to see him get married soon. Shortly after that a long-acquainted female friend of his got saved and baptized. The two of them got married in the Lord and consecrated to open their home for fellowship with the saints. Moreover, the Lord brought a young couple to Chittagong for the church life. They have since coordinated with the saints in a sweet way to write the divine history together.

We believe that through the steadfast prayers of the saints in one accord and through our contacting people of all walks, the Lord will surely bless His church with increase. We look to the Lord to raise up more seekers, more open homes and more pure vessels in this city for the bearing of His testimony.