

Update on the Churches of UAE

The United Arab Emirates is one of the member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council. The social and ecological progress in the region and the prosperous tourism resulted in a more tolerant policy of religion, yet Christians by and large remain cautious in their exercise of faith so as to avoid any form of conflict. In the past three decades, the economic opportunities in this region have attracted many migrant workers from all over the world. Among these are some saints who came initially for personal reasons, only to realize eventually that it was actually God's sovereign arrangement that ushered them here in order to water this once dry land with His word and to establish the testimony of Jesus in every city. All these saints meet in oneness for the glorious testimony of Christ and the church.

The four churches in UAE are growing healthily with a good number of middle-aged and young working saints who keep the church meetings vibrant and living. The saints are also burdened to establish meetings in the surrounding emirate states. The churches follow closely the speaking of the ministry through their pursuit of the Holy Word for Morning Revival of the seven feasts. The desperate need now, in sync with the growth of the churches, is to lead the saints in the matter of church service and truth perfecting. After much fellowship and prayers together, the brothers feel there is an urgent need to conduct regular Perfecting Trainings for the saints, especially for the serving ones, to equip them in the areas of the ministry, truth, life, service, and character.

Last August, some of us brothers from the Philippines came to visit the churches in UAE and attended the Perfecting Training for Responsible Brothers held in Dubai. The brothers opened the training by encouraging the saints with a word from "Vessels Useful to the Lord": "The success of the church service [depends] on the building up of a proper character.... [We need to have] a good character to meet the Lord's need in this age.... Character [is] the life-pulse of service." (Msg. 5) Some 30 brothers that came from Dubai, Sharjah, Abu Dhabi and Al Ain responded to this word in one accord with a strong "Amen!" The messages covered the topics of "Character", "The Churches, the Ministry and the Work", "The Living, Service and Meeting of the Elders", and "How to Administrate the Church". Through the rich supply of the word, the brothers received not only cherishing and nourishing, but also adjustment for their further going on. At the end of each message, the brothers were given the time to share, ask questions and fellowship with one another. This provided an atmosphere for open fellowship to address the practical needs of the growing churches in this fast developing region of the Middle East.

One special event during the training week was the combined Lord's Table Meeting of the churches in UAE where some 135 saints from different places and of different races attended. The spirit of oneness was strong and prevailing. As the brothers broke bread, the praises were high and glorious. It was indeed an endearing moment, as if we were in the third heavens. After the Table Meeting, the brothers released two messages on "The Aspects of the Christian Life and Church Life Seen in the New Jerusalem". In the afternoon,

another message on "Redeeming the Time" was given, followed by fellowship in groups of brothers and sisters. We thank the Lord for blessing this Perfecting Training and that the Spirit's leading was present in every meeting. The words spoken were so rich and there was never enough time for all the saints to share.

On the last two days of our time in UAE, we visited Abu Dhabi and Al Ain. These two churches recently grew in number with newly baptized ones and saints that recently migrated. As a result, the saints are desperately seeking to minister life to these ones and to carry out church services in a good order.

In every locality that we visited in UAE, the care and hospitality of the saints were tender and sweet. Praise the Lord! The church is the house of the living God and God manifested in the flesh. May the Lord fully accomplish His eternal purpose through His church!

Visiting the Churches in Nepal

After the LMA Conference last October, a fellow serving brother at Rhema Literature Distributors and I visited the churches in Nepal. On Saturday, the 1st of November, we met with over 40 saints in Kathmandu for the Lord's Table Meeting. In that meeting we encouraged the saints to exercise their spirit to contact the Lord in the morning to establish a proper, organic and affectionate relationship with the Lord and to pray to cooperate with the Lord to bring the kingdom gospel to the people in Nepal. Upon the saints' request, we also shared with them the history and effectiveness of Rhema distribution and encouraged them to participate in the translation and promotion of literature in the ways that they could so that more Nepalese can know and enjoy the riches of this ministry.

On the next morning, we went to Pokhara, the second largest city of the country, to visit the serving ones there. At the time of our arrival, more than ten saints and children were singing at their place, among whom were some newly saved ones and some brothers and sisters meeting in denominations. We had the opportunity to tell them that our Lord is experienceable and that His word is living and instant. Later on we also showed the serving ones how to use the Rhema literature to preach the gospel and shepherd the new ones. Presently there is only one booklet in Nepalese, and 7 Rhema books are being proofread. We expect to send the Rhema books for print in May or June of this year. We also plan to send someone here early this year to establish a service group, which will help to promote the literature, gather recipient data, and mail out the free literature.

Every morning the serving ones in Pokhara have morning revival with the new ones and study the language on their own. In the afternoon they would go out to contact people and then have home meetings at night. They have led more than 10 people to salvation in the past 6 months. However, how to keep people in the church life remains a challenge as people in Nepal are mostly polytheists. While we were there, the serving ones had much fellowship among themselves and decided to continue their weekly prayer and fellowship via Skype. May the Lord be their wisdom and power that through their coordination this land would be filled with the knowledge of Jehovah!
(Brother Lo, Rhema Literature Distributors)

Turkey: Propagation Report and Testimony

Since the inauguration of the new president last year, waves of political, economic and social turbulence ensued and people became discontent and suspicious of the government. While the government aims to increase its influence internationally at the time of economic conflict between the U.S. and Russia and gradually tightens its control over the media, the saints are grasping every possible opportunity to preach the kingdom gospel. We trust the current situation in Turkey is paving the way for God's economy and for His return by softening people's hearts toward the gospel.

On the campus side, we continue to contact the local college students and invite them to our home for Bible reading and hymn singing. We also try to make friends in the communities by teaching Chinese, getting temp jobs, and giving acupuncture treatments. We pray that we will be able to gain some key families for the testimony of Jesus here.

In the meantime, over 5,000 Rhema books have been freely distributed to several Christian groups through an online Christian books platform. Recently we began to contact some of the literature recipients in order to find out the real seekers as a preparation for our propagation in eastern Turkey.

One thing that is particularly encouraging is that we have been visiting a Christian group in Muğla in south-western Turkey. This group was introduced to us by some saints. The leading brother of that group is a native Turk, while the congregation mostly came from different countries. They left their denominations for they only wanted to meet in the Lord's name. They also call themselves the church in Muğla and realize that they all partake of the one bread with believers all over the world. They practice home meetings, in which everyone speaks, and receive all genuine believers regardless of their nationalities and races. When we visited them and read Song of Songs chapters 7 and 8 with them, they enjoyed it very much. We have yet to mention the ministry and the ground of the church to them. But the more we have fellowship with them, the more we become burdened to bring them into the unique fellowship of the universal Body of Christ and the riches of the ministry of the age. We pray that they would go forth unto Him outside the camp and become the testimony of Jesus in Turkey.

On January 4, the first Lord's Day of the year, we had a joint Table meeting for all the saints in Turkey. The saints were encouraged to renew their consecration for this new year. May those who love Him in Turkey be like the sun when it rises in its might.

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When we first came to Turkey, life was just filled with day-to-day

ordinary chores, such as buying groceries in the market with hand motions and cooking. Nevertheless, I truly experienced what hymn #598 says, that we wear the earthly form and our outward needs are those of other men, yet we are dwelling in heaven while walking upon the earth, and though we are powerless, we guard the world with arms unseen. However, once I learned to speak Turkish and got used to my surroundings, my prayers lessened and my vision dimmed. Then I was disheartened as the Lord exposed me of my condition. But one day the Lord spoke to me through Heb. 4:15-16, "For we do not have a High Priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all respects like us, yet without sin. Let us therefore come forward with boldness to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace for timely help." The more I pray-read this verse, the more I felt His mercy upon

me. When the Lord was able to break through in me, I began to see changes in the new ones. I was filled with unspeakable joy when new ones shared with me how they got through with the Lord in some difficult matters or how their prayers got answered. One time as we were having meal with some new ones, the six-year-old child of a new one, being used to hearing us call on the Lord, asked everyone present to call on the Lord's name. As a result, a local gospel friend just called on the Lord naturally. I was so encouraged! May the Lord continue to spread in us first that He would have a way to spread in this country.

(Sister R.)

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After laboring in this country for more than one year, we still have not seen any "glorious" result. Yet I have become closer to the Lord while being pressed on every side. Over here we are not able to preach the gospel openly and directly due to restrictions in the environment. This is very different from what I learned and was used to. Even though we keep trying different ways of contacting people, there is just not much result. This causes me to weep much before the Lord. Yet one day I came across hymn #316 in my prayer time:

"Or some day when my Lord will come, and called to meet Him I'll be blest, He then will say to me, 'Well done,' and I shall enter into rest." While singing this hymn, the Lord turned my eyes to focus on Him, the precious One, and His appearing on that day. Yes, my labor today may seem hopeless, and yet that day I shall be approved by the Lord and enter into His rest. I thank the Lord for what He has done in me to show me how natural I am. I give myself to exercise being one with the Lord that He will truly have a way in me and carry out what is on His heart through me.

(Brother I.)

