
IRAQ

A COUNTRY FALLING APART,
OR A TESTIMONY TO THE NATIONS?

BY **FABIAN GRECH**

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Looking back at 2012 when God called my family and a small team to move to Iraq we knew that Iraq was a significant country in regards to what God wanted to do in the Middle East. He sent our team with a vision and blueprints on how to build. The vision was a picture of a wheel, the center hub being a House of Prayer, where the incense of worship and prayer continually rises before God.¹ This place, where the presence of God is experienced, cultivated, and taught would also operate as a School of Ministry to train leaders in both Word and Spirit.

The Lord moved us at just the right time, in order for our team to adjust to life in Iraq, start making disciples, and establish the Mesopotamia House of Prayer (MHOP) one and a half years before the visible invasion of the most demonic and deadliest terrorist group the world has witnessed in years.

In Iraq the majority of people in the Christian community have been “traditional or cultural Christians.” At one time there were about 1.5 million people who identified themselves as Christian, but since 2003 that population has dropped to less than 200,000.² After ISIS invaded in 2014 the number has fallen even more significantly. Most of the Iraqis leaving the country are Christian-background. The devil’s plan is clearly to push the salt and light out of Iraq.

When ISIS started rapidly moving into our region last year, God moved strongly in my heart to see a greater prayer movement in Iraq. From a natural perspective I thought, “How can this happen? Believers are leaving! The Christian exodus has intensified, and people are even telling us to leave.” However in September 2014, a joint effort of multiple houses of prayer (HOPs) from various countries gathered to engage in 50 hours of worship and prayer. God’s presence was manifested in powerful ways! Local believers were filled with

his Spirit, many did not want to leave the prayer meeting, the sick were healed, others received fresh vision for their country, and several were eager to give themselves more to worship and prayer.

Since that time brothers and sisters from different HOPs have come to serve within MHOP by training Iraqi believers to learn instruments, worship with the Word, sing spontaneous songs, and grow in ways to engage sustained worship and prayer. It has been amazing to hear new songs of worship coming forth in Iraq at the MHOP! We believe the right foundations are being laid. The “new church” of Iraq will be a house of prayer for all nations, a habitation and resting place for God.³

The Iraqi people, especially the Kurds, are very kind and willing to hear our message. However since ISIS’s invasion into Iraq we have begun to see an even greater openness of people’s hearts, both from Muslim and traditional Christian backgrounds, to the message of the gospel. Many have questions about God and life, several want to receive prayer, and the sick specifically ask for Christians to pray for their healing. We are witnessing numerous Muslims questioning Islam and desiring to know more about what Christians believe. In our city there are refugees and internally-displaced peoples (IDPs) everywhere, and we regularly visit refugee camps to minister the gospel. Repeatedly, we encounter women in tears whos’ husbands have been killed by ISIS; people tormented by nightmares; men wounded from terrorist attacks; and children paralyzed by fear, poverty and hopelessness.

Ever since the initial flood of Syrian refugees in 2013 God has been opening doors for us in various refugee camps. One nearby camp is full of hundreds of Muslim families from Mosul who are victims of ISIS. In the first visit to this camp our team had the opportunity to worship Jesus in Arabic. As a crowd



gathered around us, we preached the gospel, many asked for Christian literature, and men lined up waiting to bring us to their tents in order to pray for their sick.


One man we met was suffering from bad eyesight and the inability to sleep at night for many years. We laid hands on him and prayed with him. When I asked if he would like an *Injil* (the New Testament), he answered with excitement on his face that he wanted one. The next time I went to that camp I visited him. He was happy to report that he had begun sleeping at night and his eyesight had improved.

That same day, as we were worshipping in Arabic, a lady asked us for a Bible. A few days later we met again to spend more personal time with her. She was very open and agreeable to the gospel as we shared. She told us, "I believe that Jesus is the Son of God. I do believe that Jesus did die for me, to save me." Then she said, "I want to have a relationship with God through Jesus." When we asked her, "Why?" she answered, "Because he's the only One who knows everything about me and would understand me." After taking time to explain about what this could cost her we asked, "Are you still willing to follow Jesus?" She replied, "Why would I hold anything back from him, when he gave his life for me?"

As evidenced in this man and this woman, the fields of Muslims are ripe for harvest here in Iraq! This is the time to reach Muslims for Jesus. As terrorist groups

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like ISIS are on the rise many Muslims are becoming disenchanted with Islam.

As the Christian exodus in the Middle East has swelled, the world is watching and questioning if Christianity can survive in the face of persecution and terrorism within the very region of its birth. Not only will it survive, but we anticipate the greatest outpouring of God's Spirit in church history, producing a new church, primarily of Muslim-background believers that looks so much like Jesus that it will be the bride he is coming back for! Many people see no hope for Iraq. But we know that Assyria (modern-day Iraq) will be a blessing on the earth and testimony to the nations!⁴ 

¹ See Malachi 1:11 and Revelation 5:8

² Erasmus blog (July 2014). Iraqi Christians and the West: A rock and a hard place. Retrieved from economist.com

³ See Isaiah 66:1, NIV

⁴ See Isaiah 19:23-25. We believe this is what will help provoke Israel to jealousy, causing the hearts of the Jewish people to embrace Jesus Christ as the Messiah. See Romans 10:19-21.