

How the Lord Is Moving Powerfully Through This Predominantly Muslim Nation

Our work here in Eurasia has really developed in a tremendous way in the last six months. Every week I am constantly blown away by how much the Lord is actively doing in our midst here through our little community. I was actually just speaking with our pastor about this the other day. He is an indigenous brother and one of the most influential leaders in the entire country. We were both so greatly humbled and perplexed by how much God has been doing. I can say with confidence and experience that I have seen more fruit in the last six months than I have in the last six years of work here. We live in remarkable times, and I believe we are only just beginning to touch the beginnings.

The nation that I work in stands unique among the nations of the earth for its extraordinary history of revival, prayer, worship, influence and power. There is perhaps no other nation on the earth outside of Israel that has the spiritual resume that ours has. Our nation serves as a crossroads of the world, positioned on a continental divide, and it has consistently functioned in a level of regional leadership and influence unlike anything I have ever seen. At the heart of all its history stands two indisputable characteristics: its history in prayer and worship, and its consistent regional influence. The city that I live in was the seat of power for a number of empires that have come and gone. It is also the center of the patriarchal authority of the Eastern churches. From the fifth through the 15th centuries, the monks of this city prayed day and night in an unceasing way. The net result is nearly 1,000 thousand years of day-and-night prayer as the heritage of this city and this nation.

From a theological perspective, this land has been marked out for greatness in both worship and influence from the earliest generations of our race. After the Great Flood, when the prophet Noah is declaring blessings and curses over his sons, he speaks a specific blessing over his middle son, Japheth. Over Japheth and his children he prophesies:

“May God enlarge Japheth, and may he dwell in the tents of Shem” (Gen. 9:27a).

All of Japheth’s children except one moved into the region that we now call “Eurasia.” It is no coincidence then that from this land has come such political and spiritual authority over the millennia. God has certainly enlarged this land in terms of influence, power, prestige and, even at times, imperial boundaries. In the same way, the blessing of Noah for these people to “dwell in the tents of Shem” has certainly come to pass in a profound way. The “tents of Shem” speaks about much more than just general fellowship and coexistence between brothers. Through the line of Shem came Abraham, Moses and the rest of Israel, to David and ultimately Messiah. Throughout this lineage, God established for Himself in certain seasons a dwelling place in the earth surrounded by unceasing prayer and worship. We see this both in the tabernacles of Moses and David. The centerpiece of these expressions was the ark of the covenant—the manifestation of God’s very presence on the earth; within these tents (and later a temple in the generation of Solomon) God’s glory dwelt with man who worshipped Him with singing and instruments. These are quite literally the tents of Shem.

One cannot conclude, therefore, that the thousand-year prayer and worship movement that existed here in this land, settled by the children of Japheth, is mere coincidence. Nor can one count as happenstance that this land has always been one of remarkable influence. It is quite evident that Noah’s blessing over this land and people has been effective. God has been faithful to enlarge this land and grant this people a history

of dwelling in the tents of Shem, as it were. It is a history of dwelling in the house of God and gazing on His beauty (Ps. 27:4). The evidence for this is unmistakable.

In light of this, it makes so much sense as to why the Lord has been speaking to us for nearly 10 years about building a city-wide indigenous expression of day-and-night prayer. I live in one of the largest cities on earth. It is perhaps the most important and influential city in this entire region. What happens here affects everything around us. It is the cultural, artistic, spiritual and social capital of our nation. When the Lord began to speak to us years ago of starting a prayer hub here, He was speaking from His strategic vantage point. God establishing His kingdom here will affect this entire nation and the entire region in the years to come.

Eleven months ago, we closed our old prayer center down just prior to the COVID-19 outbreak here. A week before the closure, the Lord spoke to me so clearly that He wanted us to launch a 24/7 prayer initiative across the nation in the spirit of the old thousand-years' prayer movement. I called our pastor, and we began to network and rally the believers across the nation. Within a few days, the entire nation went on a 15-week lockdown. Remarkably, during the spring, the entire nation banded together and carried 24/7 prayer together—locals and foreigners. It was the longest continuous prayer expression since the Islamic armies destroyed the monasteries and brought a thousand years of prayer to an end in the 15th century! It was absolutely historic. There are a few important details to bear in mind when processing this: The first is that we live in the most unreached Islamic nation per capita in the world. The second is that we mobilized a nationwide unity movement of 24/7 prayer within two or three weeks. The third is that by the time we transitioned to building the new prayer hub in June, the participation was approximately 90% indigenous. It was an unbelievable return to a storyline God had on this nation several hundred years ago.

It was also a marked picture of this nation's destiny to "dwell in the tents of Shem." God released so much grace on this.

Since June we have seen more Muslims come to faith in Jesus than in the previous six years combined, and it's not just in our church. Churches across the nation are reporting an explosion of growth in their numbers. Since the nation banded together in unity to seek the Lord in continuous prayer and fasting, everyone has felt a huge shift. The people coming to the Lord now are also a new caliber in quality. They are nearly all high-potential leaders. They are hungry and wholehearted. Beyond this, most of the new believers are giving themselves to prayer with us. Our prayer hub facilitates prayer and worship in the local language as well as English as the international lingua franca. These believers are being discipled and are growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Every week we have a city-wide service with the preaching of the Word and corporate worship. We have some local believers who are traveling nearly two hours to come and be a part of what God is doing.

Through all of this, we are humbled and are continuing to press into the Lord in prayer and worship. It is remarkable how the more we give our time and energy to prayer and worship, the more the fruit continues to grow. More people are coming to Jesus in this predominantly Islamic nation than ever before in history. They are being saved, baptized and discipled. They are also being brought into a prayer culture and are being taught the immense value of singing to Jesus, worshipping Him and joining Him in His priestly ministry of intercession for the nations. It is a beautiful thing to be a part of a generation waking up to this inheritance and seeking to "dwell in the tents of Shem"—to dwell in the house of the Lord in the place of prayer, fasting and worship.

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