

God’s Mission in Turkey

The fervent faith and sincere dedication of local leaders to make Christ known among the needy people in Turkey and social work among the Iranian / Syrian refugees can be admired!

In the end of 2019 I, together with Rev. Oeds Blok from the Netherlands, organized in cooperation with local Baptist leaders, a conference for church planters. Oeds is an experienced church planter who coaches others; and Jelle van Luipen joined in – a member of the Baptist Church in Leidsche Rijn.



The conference was started by pastor Ertan, the chairman of Turkish Baptists with a Bible reflection from Ps. 126, prayer and welcome. There were present 20 participants from Turkey.

Pastor Ertan has effectively led a Turkish church in Izmir since 1989. This is the very first Baptist church in Turkey being associated with the EBF and the BWA. The congregation has a building in Buca – southern district of Izmir, which used to be an Anglican church. The Baptists work among refugees from Syria who meet in the same church building. The second Baptist church has existed for 4 years in Menemen which is the north of Izmir. They also reach out to the Roma people. There are plans to start one other congregation in Pergamon.



Pastor Orhan has ministered in Samsun since 2003. He has established a growing “Agape Church” and a few years ago new church building was erected. Orhan has a vision to influence the numerous coastal cities on the Black Sea. The gospel mission

started with the help of EBF in Amasya and later expanded to Ordu, Sinop and Giresun where besides Turkish groups there are also many refugees from Iran.

Pastor Sükrü leads the church in Adana (south east of country) and is trying to plant another congregation in this city. They currently meet in a rented hall but have the vision to buy or erect a church building. There are many Syrian refugees in Adana since the city is located near to the border with Syria and the Baptists help them.

One other congregation is in Istanbul which meets in a rented flat there. The leaders reported that hundreds of people every week contact them via internet.

The programme contained an overview of church planting in the Eastern Europe and the Middle East, including also some aspects of work among the refugees in Western Europe. The 2nd session discussed the important criteria that a church planter should implement, i.e.: accepting a personal call, ability to build a team, having a vision and determining a target group, relationships with mentors / coaches and developing supporting partnerships, also avoiding numerous mistakes.

Oeds centered on the pioneering aspect of a church planter. Using the example from Acts 10 he emphasized that communication of the gospel requires openness to others and an ability of bridge building. During the 2nd session he used the text from Acts 20,17-38 and talked about the importance of personal growth. He also pointed out to the book "The Undefended Leader" by Simon Walker where the author elaborates different aspects of a personal ego. He finally encouraged the listeners to be aware of their temptations and how to properly face them.



Local leaders shared some good advises from their experience. They pointed out that the Christian church is like a family and new people that join in must be cared for. Preparation for baptism requires time and good teaching - only then the congregation may experience a steady growth. New members ought to be diligently disciplined and leaders need mentors to prosper in ministry. Personal relationships are indispensable to encourage others and overcoming any prejudice against strangers. A leader needs to have knowledge of local laws to function effectively.

The atmosphere of conference was very good, the participants were active and attentive, the translation was excellent, the breaks offered opportunity for an

interaction, the time table was respected and the meals were very tasty. Pastor Ertan at the end of conference thanked and invited us to organize a similar one in future.

After the conference there was a baptism of one Turkish believer in the Black Sea and the participants were invited to witness. The church is located on the sea shore, so anybody could observe pastor Orhan baptizing a young man. Later that day I and Oeds travelled with some others to Sinop where we met with a group of Iranian refugees. We experienced there warm welcome and sweet fellowship.

In conclusion, the Turkish Baptists are grateful for the cooperation with the EBF as they see much benefit. They have learned a lot from the cooperation so far, especially with regard to proper management, leadership and they also appreciate a backup of their own efforts. They recently started the Baptist Foundation which has the goal of empowering Baptists and can legally own a property which significantly enhances their work.



I, together with my Dutch friends, spent a great time of fellowship and ministry in Turkey. We admired the fervent faith and sincere dedication of local leaders to make Christ known among the people in Turkey as well as the loving care for the Iranian / Syrian refugees. They virtually embody the gospel and their attitude is contagious...

Prayer requests

1. Pray for the many people who visit the churches that God touches their hearts.
2. Pray for spiritual growth and maturity of the church members.
3. Pray for the local Christians who help refugees spiritually and economically.

In Christ,
Daniel Trusiewicz
EBF Mission Coordinator

Planting new churches together!
For the glory of God!

