

FROM A HAIRY ROCK MUSICIAN INTO A MISSIONARY

Acts 19:9,10

“But some of them became obstinate; they refused to believe and publicly maligned the Way. So Paul left them. He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord.”

I. Life Testimony Vladimir Point (Turkey UBF)

My name is Vladimir Point. I was born in Ukraine. I grew up in a Catholic family. My father passed away when I was 15. When he was dying in hospital, I did not visit him, because at that time life meant nothing to me. I came to UBF in 1995 at the age of 17, a freshman of physics in Kiev. I played the guitar in a rock band, had long hair and showed off in UBF. Then I borrowed some money from my Bible teacher and left the UBF. When I was 19, one girl told me she had a child from me, which was wrong. I had reached the bottom and came back to UBF. Based on John 14:1-3 I repented and believed in Jesus with all my heart. I realized how stupid I was to look for some leftovers in this world, seeking girls' love, when the full measure of God's love and his treasures were already waiting for me in heaven.

Dr. Peter Kim invited me to eat at his house many times. I felt his fatherly love in his practical help. Once I invited 18 students to our Bible conference. I wanted to help them all at the same time but all of them left UBF. I started doing 10 different activities simultaneously but failed in all of them. My Bible teacher gave me a training name: Point. I stopped doing everything and concentrated on one thing: methodical, deep and regular Bible studies with prayer. My Bible teacher taught me financial responsibility. I thought that missionaries were supposed to help native Bible teachers financially. Dr. Peter taught me never to borrow money but to depend on God. God took away my beggar mentality. Step by step, God made my life fruitful. Between 2000 and 2005, ten Bible teachers were raised in my fellowship. Even my mom became a Bible teacher.

In 2004 we started to pray for Muslim countries. God opened a way for me and in January 2005, I went to Turkey. Dr. Peter Kim gave me a key verse, Acts 19:9,10. First I lived in a flat without bed or heating, but then I found a proper apartment for my family, I also found a job as an English teacher although I had to learn English myself. In 2006 I finally entered Bosphorus University as a freshman and we received the residence permit.

Students in Turkey are afraid even to open the Bible. I realized that God's mission demanded us to have common life with one student. Nikolay from Kyrgyzstan lives with us now. He wants to be a

Bible teacher for Turkish students. Brother Yılmaz had thought I was an American spy, but now he is growing as a Bible teacher. Many Turkish students have come to our home, joined our Bible academies and studied the Bible. As we continue to pray and speak to those whose hearts are moved, God will raise 12 disciples of Jesus at Bosphorus University and make Turkey into a source of blessing for Muslim countries.

II. Mission Report on Middle East

The history of the gospel started 2000 years ago in the Middle East. In the beginning the gospel spread throughout the entire region. But since Mohamed founded Islam in 610 in Mecca most of the nations became Islamic nations. There are numerous conflicts in the Middle East, where – apart from the Jews in Israel and a very small number of Christians – only Muslims live. Spanish Missionary Raymond Lally (1235-1315) was stoned to death at the age of 80. Through such sacrifice of many martyrs, the seed of the gospel has been planted in the Middle East.

The absolute necessity of Muslim mission became eminent as terrorism increased (including 9/11). Historically hostilities and mutual reservations between Muslims and Christians are a great obstacle to Muslim mission. It is also a great obstacle that Islam is a closed society, where religion, culture, and politics are integrated.

In 1990, missionary A was sent to Kuwait. During the Gulf war he escaped with other war refugees. But because of his broken shepherd heart for Muslim people he returned to Kuwait. The same year a new missionary came to Kuwait and missionary A went to pioneer Jordan, which is located in the center of the Middle East, which is also a cultural bridge between Asia, Africa, and Europe. While working in the embassy, missionary A studied Arabic for 4 years and taught the word of God to Jordanian native students who had spiritual desire. Until now five native college students met Jesus and are growing as disciples of Jesus through regular Bible study. After finishing his Arabic studies, he is praying to study Archeology and to establish an archeological institute in Jordan in order to lay a good foundation for long term mission.

Saudi Arabia is the home of the Muslims, which is strictly closed and a 100% Islamic nation. In August of 1995, missionary K's house church was sent there through a construction company. Because of wire tapped telephone lines and observation it was like living in a jail and living in the Mission field itself meant a constant danger. But Missionary K decided to stay in Saudi Arabia until he fulfilled God's mission. By faith his house church kept the lamp of prayer in the past more than 10 years and are learning Arabic together with their children.

Lebanon Mission began in October of 1995 through Missionary H when the door was opened through a Korean company. As a single woman, while working and studying the language for 1 year, she built a prayer altar in Beirut, which was devastated after 15 years of civil war and where soldiers were carrying

loaded guns. In 1997, after marrying with C Missionary, who had vision for the Middle East mission, they started missionary work in Beirut University. As God's chosen people they visited campus actively. Then God lead one sister and one brother to 1:1 Bible study and is working to spread the word to many campuses in Lebanon. Qatar was pioneered in the November of 1995 by Missionary A. Like Saudi Arabia, 99% of the population in Qatar is Muslim. It is difficult to meet natives because women are not allowed to associate in the society. But strangely 73% of the students at Qatar University are women. In this way women missionaries are meeting natives through language course in the university and they are preparing long term mission strategy.

We can summarize the characteristic of the Middle East Mission as the following:

First. It requires a long-term and lonely struggle of faith because of the high-level observation and control of the Muslim government. Therefore, house church ministry is important.

Second. The disciple making ministry takes a long time and much patience because of the closed Islamic religious culture and political environment.

Third. Since permanent residency is not provided to foreigners, visa and self-supporting problems should be solved by different means such as enrolling in the universities.

Out of this the following Mission Strategy and prayer topics for Middle East Mission arise:

First. To the Muslim countries, which have to import advanced technologies, we should send out professional missionaries like computer engineers, doctors, technicians, nurses, English teachers and serve the evangelical ministry through handing over the technologies and public service.

Second. We should penetrate into the walls of the Muslim through modern technologies like internet 1:1 Bible study, SMS, and mass communication. As an example, in 1999, 15,000 people attended a worship service by Pastor Yonggi Cho in Dubai. Most of the attendants came through the advertisement on the Internet.

Third. Even though some countries are very rich due to oil money, many refugees in the Middle East are in need of practical and spiritual help because of political oppression and civil war. In addition, we should also help the Muslim immigrants in Europe.

Fourth, language must be conquered.

Fifth. We need to establish native leadership and educating 2nd Generations.