

## **Iraq: God is moving in the land of Abraham**

From the four corners of the country they gathered in a remote location in eastern Iraq. By bus, car, airplanes, some came on foot. Believers from the cities in the north - Mosul, Dahuk, Kirkuk, Erbil, Sulimaynia. From the south - Basra, Najaf and Baghdad - many risked their very lives to attend this yearly prayer conference organized for all Iraqi believers - Arab and Kurd. They all had come for one purpose: to unite together and seek God in prayer and worship for the hearts and souls of Iraq.

As the first morning's session began, the air was filled with electricity and anticipation. It was obvious something historical was taking place. Packing into the simple conference hall on the hillside, seven hundred people, many between the young age of twenty and fifty lifted their voices in unison as the worship team began to lead the gathering in songs of praise to the Lord. Songs of thanksgiving and praise rang throughout the hall. Many of the young believers expressed their joy through leaping and dancing, others waved banners of worshipful expression to the King of Kings. It was a celebration of God's grace.

***"Iraqi's are coming to Christ daily, many of them from an Islamic background, and often through visions and dreams."***

In the midst of difficult circumstances, there are first signs of a spiritual revival. Iraqi's are coming to Christ daily, many of them from an Islamic background. Day after day I heard the testimonies of those who had conversions to Christ through visions and dreams. Some had come to Christ through simply reading an Arabic Bible they had been given. Several converts were baptized in water as a public confession of their faith.

I listened to the incredible story of Fatima, a young lady who came from a very strict Sunni Muslim family in Baghdad. During Saddam Hussein's dictatorship, Fatima's father was a prominent member of the infamous Baath party until someone gave him an Arabic New Testament one day.



After reading about the sacrifice Jesus Christ had made for the sins of the world, her father was convicted and prayed to know this Jesus as his Savior. For over a year, Fatima's father secretly read his Bible and began to pray for his wife and his daughters that they too would see Christ for themselves. Fatima shared that her mom and sisters noticed a drastic change in their father's life, but had no idea of what had happened.

***"He couldn't contain his newfound faith any longer. He shared his testimony with his entire family and invited them to accept Jesus too."***

One day, Fatima saw her mother in their kitchen crying. When asked what was troubling her, she exclaimed that she had seen a vision of a man in bright white during the night claiming he was God! Fatima's father couldn't contain his newfound faith any longer. In a gush of joy and tears, her father shared his conversion with his entire family and invited them to accept this Jesus too. Fatima beamed as she recounted how God's spirit came into their house as they too accepted Christ into their hearts.

Eventually, more and more people became aware of Fatima's family's conversion. The persecution became so severe from the fundamentalist Islamic Sunni community that they were forced to leave their home and move to a safer place in Baghdad. Even so, Fatima's family rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer for the Lord and continue to grow in their faith and Christian witness. Later that afternoon, I met Fatima's father, mother and her two sisters

and brother. All of them are shining examples of God's love for the Muslim world and they attend one of the fastest growing fellowships in Baghdad. They continue to share their faith openly with Muslims and anyone who will hear.

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This story is just one shining example of what God is doing among the Iraqi people. Just a couple of years ago, there were only a few Evangelical protestant churches known in Iraq. It is now reported that by the end of 2008, there will be over 40 Evangelical churches worshipping the Lord throughout Iraq. In Baghdad, one pastor reports that there are 20-30 new converts added to the church every week, many coming from Muslim backgrounds, and as a result of having dreams and visions of Jesus Christ.

This growth is not going without persecution however. Presently, in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul, Christians are being killed for the faith if they don't convert to Islam. Many are being driven from their homes in fear. Yet, despite these hardships, and even martyrdom, God is fulfilling His promise and is pouring out His Spirit upon the sons and daughters in the Land of Abraham!

Source: David LeCompte, Mission International (edited by Joel News)