

Opposition, opportunity, and huge open doors

If you could sit down with three Middle Eastern pastors, what would you expect them to say? You may be surprised to hear stories of openness, opportunities for mission, and miraculous answers to prayer. And as three pastors tell us here, church life in the Middle East is full of surprises ...

Local pastors share their views on God's work in the Middle East, and our partnership with them.

"We are seeing 'open heaven' over the Muslim world," says Pastor Chuck*, who has a large congregation. "More Muslims are becoming Christians than at any time before."

Pastor Joe*, whose church is growing daily agrees. "In 1 Corinthians 16:9, Paul says 'God opened a door that is huge and effective, and there are many who oppose me'. I read that and felt God say to me 'don't look at the opposition, look for opportunity. The door is huge and effective.'"

"The Lord is opening doors in ways we never expected or have experienced before," adds Pastor Alan*, of a church in a neighbouring country.

"We have founded five church plants, with the permission of the authorities. There have been no objections at all. We started meetings and the churches are now growing. In one 'house church' we have had to take down a wall between two rooms to get everyone in."

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This growth in the church does attract some opposition. "We live day-by-day," explains Pastor Chuck. "We don't know what tomorrow will bring, but we know who holds tomorrow. Today I have the freedom and responsibility to serve my God.

If I worry about tomorrow, I ruin today - I miss the opportunity to serve Him today." But when opportunity comes, it does show the need in the Middle Eastern



Your prayers affect the growth of the church

church. "The Lord is opening doors and has blessed us with great leaders in our church plants," says Pastor Alan. "We need more resources and opportunities to train more leaders. If we get that, then the next step will be even more new churches."

And the message these pastors have for Christians elsewhere is one of gratitude and encouragement. "Your prayer is moving heaven," says Pastor Chuck, "and when heaven moves, things on earth change. Because of your prayers we

"Your prayer is moving heaven."

are having a great harvest." Pastor Joe, whose church has run a holiday club with young adults from the West says, "Thank you for thinking of us and sending your youth to minister with us.

For the English summer school, we need English speakers and parents only send their kids if Westerners will teach them."

The children who come to the summer school learn English from Bible stories and hear about Jesus for the very first time.

"You have family here," continues Pastor Joe. "You have church brothers and sisters here. Jesus began his ministry when he was baptised here in Jordan. We believe God will restore his Church with more than we had before, here, in the Middle East." ^m

Arab pastors talk about ...

Mission

"We want to see Arab Christians reaching other Arabs. There are 400 million Arabs and we have the same culture. Our goal is to have Arab missionaries in all 22 Arab countries."

- Pastor Chuck

Your Prayers

"Help us with prayer. The Lord is intervening in supernatural ways. It's not human power or programmes."

- Pastor Alan

Opposition

"The opposition is God's business. We need to be faithful and believe that he will cover us. God has opened the door. The church is growing and people are coming to Jesus."

- Pastor Joe

MECO

"Working with MECO is a wonderful partnership - not just as partners but as friends. MECO is a huge blessing to the Middle East, and to me personally."

- Pastor Chuck

* Names changed for security.

