

## The Church in Dhaka, Bangladesh

### Gospel Propagation

In May, we felt that the number of baptism this year was very measly, so we desperately went before the Lord to ask for fruit. The Lord was faithful and heard our prayers. Soon we met a student whom we felt the Lord wanted to gain during our sharing of the gospel with him. We earnestly invited him to our home and he eventually agreed. Later, when we fellowshiped with him about baptism, he readily accepted it. We were greatly comforted and enlightened that nothing is impossible. We just need to persevere, to be desperate before the Lord, and to lead others to salvation through prayer, the Spirit and the Word. By the end of May, a total of 6 brothers and sisters got baptized.

In June, a gospel friend with Buddhist background was baptized. He was referred to us by an acquaintance and met with us a number of times. We were burdened for his salvation and kept praying for him. One day he attended the Lord's Table meeting and the saints preached the gospel to him. He expressed his personal faith toward the Lord and was willing to receive Him, but was unwilling to be baptized for fear of persecution and opposition from his family. We used the words of the Bible to testify to him that the unit of salvation was the household, and that the Lord needed to gain him first in order to save his family. Two sisters also testified how the Lord had first gained them before gaining their families subsequently. In the end he gladly called on the Lord and was baptized into the Lord.

### Weekday Perfecting Trainings

Since the beginning of this year, the church has been holding perfecting trainings every other week on the messages of the seven feasts to help the saints enjoy the Lord's present speaking. The number of participants, including some new ones, gradually and steadily increased through the steadfast shepherding of the saints during the week and their active invitations prior to the trainings. May the Lord release more saints to receive the up-to-date speaking and be constituted with the truth to become pillars in the church and to build up His Body.

### Long-Holiday Blending

During the long holiday in early May, the saints from Dhaka traveled to Cox's Bazar for a perfecting meeting and outdoor blending. During the gathering, the saints earnestly entered into and shared from the Gospel of John. At the same time, they practiced calling on the Lord's name from the depth of their being. At the end, everyone had prayers of consecration, committing their whole life to the Lord. The outdoor blending time helped the saints to be more open to one another. While

spending time at the seashore and catching crabs, the saints renewed their consecration together. They began to have a deeper understanding and appreciation of one other, bringing in a sweeter fellowship. Eventually, four gospel friends were joyfully baptized. O what joy! Glory to the Lord!



### Visitations and Literature Distribution

In April, the saints began to visit chapels in the surrounding areas. In mid-May, two brothers went to Sreemangal in the northeast to distribute the Rhema books and to contact the local Christians. They discovered that people were simple and open, yet their understanding of the truth was very limited. The brothers shared the Word with them, and the recipients testified that these words were so fresh to them.

In June, two brothers went to distribute the Rhema books in the north. They went to different areas and visited the saints, encouraging the young people to love and pursue the Lord. They gave out the Rhema books to whoever had a seeking heart. The brothers testified that the saints in those areas truly had an earnest heart but their knowledge and experience of the Lord were inadequate. Indeed there was a need for families to migrate there for long term shepherding that the saints may enjoy the Lord, live a normal church life, and grow in life.

Another three saints went to visit some cities around Dhaka and blended with the local saints to learn about their condition. They also used the opportunity to shepherd them with the Lord's Word that they might be supplied. While they were meeting with a saint, they came across a junior high school dormitory in a local Christian area. Sixty-seven students resided in the small dormitory with poor facilities. But regardless of the students' backgrounds, Christian or not, they read the Bible and prayed every day. They were very open to the saints. May the Lord bless His work here, leading the saints in their labor and raising up more young people who seek Him out of pure hearts!

In August we traveled to Khulna, which was about four hours from Dhaka, to distribute the Rhema Books. We visited three of the best colleges and universities to contact the students on

campus; we also went to several nearby Christian and Catholic settlements, visiting 10 homes in one day, introducing Bangla ministry books to them, sharing the Mystery of Human Life, and leading them to call on the Lord's name and to pray. Seeing that many people had lived their entire lives in the religious fold without knowing how to contact and enjoy Christ, we deeply felt the need to supply the riches of this ministry to them. We also treasured the cooperation among the brothers. Each one either shared or prayed, in English or in Bangla, bringing people into the realm of the spirit to contact the Lord. May the Lord remember all the ones that we came into contact with, that with the help of the ministry books they could go out of the fold and find pasture.



## A Report of the Trip to Tajikistan

Several of us brothers visited Tajikistan this summer to learn about the local environment and to visit local Christians. Tajikistan is a landlocked country in Central Asia, bordered by Uzbekistan to the northwest, Kyrgyzstan to the northeast, Afghanistan to the south, and mainland China to the east. The population is about nine million. The capital Dushanbe is the largest city with a population of 860,000, and Khujand is the second largest city with a population of 180,000. The income level in Tajikistan is generally low, and the gap between the rich and the poor is large; the average monthly income is about 160 USD. Tajikistan has a youthful age structure with 50% of the population under the age of 25 and an average life expectancy of 69 years. As a former Soviet union constituent, Tajikistan had a high literacy rate of 98%. The main language is Tajik, with Russian being the second lingua franca. Almost everyone we met could speak, read and write Russian.

Tajikistan is a secular Muslim country with 98% of the population being Muslim, but there are only a few mosques in the city. The constitution provides for freedom of religion, yet in recent years the government has gradually tightened control over people's participation in religious activities. Both Dushanbe and Khujand have Orthodox churches and Protestant churches run by the pastors. We visited a denomination in Dushanbe, which started in the 1930s, with around 200 people gathering on Sundays including a missionary from the United States. They also work on the young people and have prayer meetings and group meetings during the week. The content of their group

meetings is Bible reading. There are other different denominations throughout Dushanbe, with a total of about 5,000 people meeting.

We also visited a denomination in Khujand that have around 100 people gathering on Sundays. There were about 1,000 Protestant Christians in the whole city. There is no dedicated Christian area in both cities and Christians are scattered throughout the city. It is difficult to distinguish between Christians and Muslims by appearance. In our conversations with Christians in denominations, we learned that it is not feasible to publicly preach the gospel to Muslims on the road or by door-knocking. The best way is to make friends and share privately with acquaintances.

During the week that we visited Tajikistan, our general impression of the locals was that despite the high level of corruption, people were cultured and mostly helpful, and cars would give way to pedestrians. Public security seemed to be fairly good, as we could still see many females enjoying the cool air alone by the roadside or in the park as late as 11pm.

At present, there is no testimony of the Lord's recovery in Tajikistan. Several saints have received the burden to migrate. Please pray for the Lord's testimony in Tajikistan. May the Lord open the door for the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom. May He protect and bless the saints' going, and enable the saints to spread the gospel wisely and gain vessels prepared by Him. Please also pray for more saints to receive the burden and go for propagation in coordination.

