

New Macedonian Vision

Pastor Ivan Leung



During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them. (Acts 16:9-10)

This Bible passage records the well-known Macedonian vision in church history. God led Paul onto his second missionary journey. However, before Paul arrived at Troas, the Holy Spirit forbade Paul from preaching in the province of Asia and Bithynia, but led him to Troas instead where he saw the Macedonian vision. This was how the gospel entered Europe; eventually many churches were formed. Most of Paul's epistles were written during his stay in Europe, as a response to the churches' conditions. Martin Luther's Protestant Reformation and many different

missionary movements were started in Europe. It is logical to conclude that Europe has played an important role in Protestant church development.

In contrast, when we look at the spiritual conditions in Europe today, we notice that their church attendance is very low! While there are many grand church buildings beautifully designed in Gothic architecture, the percentage of European Christians attending church continues to decline. In fact, as the numbers of other religions continue to increase, it seems that many Christian churches in Europe have lost their initial appeal.

In addition, there are more than one million Chinese living in different European countries, which is a large Gospel field for Chinese European churches. As Jesus said in Matthew

9:37, *The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few.* This is the new Macedonian vision: people in Europe need to hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and churches need to be built up and spiritual leaders need to be trained.

Praise God for leading my wife and I to the Chinese European Field Forum. The theme for this conference was Advancing God's Kingdom in Europe. Not only did we meet many colleagues and missionaries from Europe, God also allowed us to see the possibilities that this vast missionary field holds and the needs of the Chinese European churches today. In contrast, I strongly believe that God has blessed the North American Chinese churches, especially the growth of our spiritual home VCAC. This is totally God's grace on us, so we need to thank God and trust in Him alone. May all glory be given to God.

Most Chinese churches in Europe have a resource deficiency. A large majority of the churches have to rent from other churches. The average attendance is about 50-100. If the attendance exceeds 150, they are already considered a big church. Many still meet together in the style of fellowships with about 20-40 members.

In addition, the European Chinese churches have a shortage of pastoral staff. Even when a church has a pastor, he will be working alone. Their lack of systematic leadership training, results in a shortage of

helpers and a compromised quality. I think of our own church, where God has given us a pastoral team, complementing each other to build up the church and being to care for and reach out to different language groups. We also have many opportunities to equip ourselves, so we should take advantage of each opportunity. God reminds us that *From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.* (Luke 12:48)

During one of the meetings, a black Alliance missionary from Peru shared with us the challenges he faces in his ministry with Muslims in Manchester. His sharing really touched my heart! When he was 9 years old, a Chinese missionary led him to Christ. God used these missionaries to work cross-culturally. I am also reminded of the importance of sharing the gospel to children, who can be our future pastors or missionaries. May God continue to bless the children's ministry in our church, and provide us with a suitable person to work with our children. During this transition period, I would like to thank every member of our Children's Ministry Committees and all the brothers and sisters who serve in this ministry for their love

and dedication. I believe that your service to the Lord will not be in vain. Thank you!

In Europe, other religions are competing for the hearts and minds of the people. Even though there may be a thirst for spirituality, people are not looking to Christ for the answers. Islam is the fastest growing religion in Europe, with their population growing at an astounding rate. Presently there are approximately 15 million Muslims in Europe. In France, the country with the highest population of Muslims, their number reaches more than 5 million. This number exceeds the total population in B.C. According to our 2006 census, the population in B.C. is 4.1 million, with 2.1 million living in the Lower Mainland. Islam is France's second most predominant religion, the Muslims are actively planning to change France, from a Catholic dominated country to a Muslim country!

In Canada, there are 820 thousand Muslims living in different cities. This is a spiritual battle; there is a pressing need for the Chinese churches to work together to spread the Gospel, build up churches and lead others to Christ. In England, many churches have now been converted to mosques and their

numbers are increasing. May God help us to work in unity to face this spiritual battle, utilizing the MSCM to save many souls. Not only are we to share the Gospel with Chinese people, but we are also to reach out to different ethnic groups. Brothers and sisters, please continue to pray for the preparation of our third site.

In this Chinese European Field Forum, I am happy to see that we are not just talking about missions, but we have actual strategic plans. The planning resulted in the formation of the Europe Joint Mission Conference. We are hoping that the European Alliance churches, with their limited resources, can work diligently together, mobilizing missions to complete the Great Commission.

And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. Matthew 24:14
He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. Revelation 22:20

**Blessings,
Pastor Ivan Leung**

VCAC Core Values

EVANGELIZING THE WORLD

Evangelizing the world is at the heart of God. We believe that our church is called to demonstrate Christ's redeeming love to all people and to all nations (*Matthew 28:19-20*). Lost people matter to God; therefore, they matter to us (*Luke 15*). As we develop a genuine relationship with others, we have an opportunity to share the truth of God's love with a heart of compassion, concern, and clear communication of the gospel. We seek to share God's unchanging truth with changing generations using approaches that are culturally relevant without compromising the integrity of God's Word (*1 Corinthians 9:19-23*). Our church is committed to active engagement in local and worldwide missions (*Acts 1:8*).