

C&MA General Assembly 2010



Over 780 delegates from across Canada and different parts of the world arrived in Antalya, Turkey for the 2010 C&MA Canada General Assembly.

By Elder Janson Ho

This year was the first time the Canadian Christian and Missionary Alliance (C&MA) ever held its General Assembly outside of Canada. In 2008, the C&MA made the bold and unprecedented decision to hold the 2010 General Assembly in Antalya Turkey. Why Turkey?

The C&MA decided to meet outside of Canada as a way of intentionally separating ourselves from our worlds at home in order to more fully and actively engage in another world – the world of missions. Although there are many churches that are already active with missions around the world, there are also many who are new to taking such steps.

Asia Minor (the western half of present day Turkey) is recognized as the cradle of Christianity, and for a

thousand years was the dynamic center of the global Christian movement. The Apostle Paul established numerous churches outside of the holy land during his missionary journeys. The book of Acts identifies the journeys and the cities on which the apostle Paul had significant impact: Antioch, Iconium, Derbe, Lystra, Seleucia, Perge, and Attalia (Acts 14:25) which today is called Antalya (the location of our Assembly). The seven churches of Revelations 1-3: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea, were all established in what is known as present day Turkey.

The core concept of the meeting in Turkey was to draw leaders from churches in Canada and around the world to gather, reflect and renew their commitment to reach all people

groups of the world for Christ. In addition to the five days of business and learning in Antalya, many of the delegates either before or after the General Assembly branched out onto specifically designed roads trips across Europe, Asia, or Africa. Their goal was to Retrace the history of Christianity, Renew a passion for missions, and Rebuild new roads for connecting with the many unreached people groups across the globe for Christ. Thus, the theme of this year's Assembly is "Let's Hit the Road" to Retrace, Renew, and Rebuild.

The strategy of the C&MA has been to identify peoples who have never heard the gospel of Jesus Christ. And then take steps to pray for them and seek the Lord as to how we can tell them the good news. As such, four areas of the world that are home to millions of these least-reached people have been identified. To identify these regions and make it easy to remember them in prayer, C&MA have created the **Five "S" Venture** to underscore our desire to reach people in these regions. The five "S" are: Silk Road, Sun, Sand, Spice, and newly added to this group is Sea to Sea.



The Theatre at Aspendos, Turkey



Silk Road: From Turkey to northwest China, and stretching from eastern Turkey through Iran to Tajikistan.



Caribbean Sun: Sharing the message of Jesus Christ in Latin America.



Desert Sand: More than 150 million people call the Desert Sand region of Africa their home.



Asian Spice: Taking the gospel to the Far East.



Sea to Sea: Taking the gospel across the Dominion of Canada.

Partnerships with like-minded organizations are one of the keys to global efforts in this new decade. The C&MA now have global ministry partners such as Ambrose University, Canadian Food Grains Bank, China Care Associates, Christian Faith Ministry, Food for the Hungry, International Health Management, Samaritan's Purse, World Relief Canada, and much more.

C&MA is also encouraging Canadian churches to start thinking strategically to develop alliances with other missional churches and organizations worldwide. This would enable congregation members to have access to serve in the outermost regions of the world without having to perform the hard ground work that is normally necessary in developing new missions.

The "Diaspora" mission strategy was a term that was used frequently during the Assembly but it was not a term that I was familiar with. Diaspora is defined as a significant movement of people sharing a common national and/or ethnic

identity. An example of this is when the Jewish population was exiled to Babylonia in the sixth century B.C. Diaspora takes place today because of wars or even economic pressures where millions of people are on the move. A few years ago our Missions Pastor and a group of VCAC church members embarked on a short term mission's trip to Dubai. It was not to target the people of Dubai but rather the numerous Chinese workers that have left their homeland in search of employment. Little did the team know but they were following the Diaspora mission strategy. Pastor Paul reported back that thousands of Chinese people had accepted Christ and that weekly Sunday services now accommodated thousands of worshippers. Talk about "reaping the great harvest".

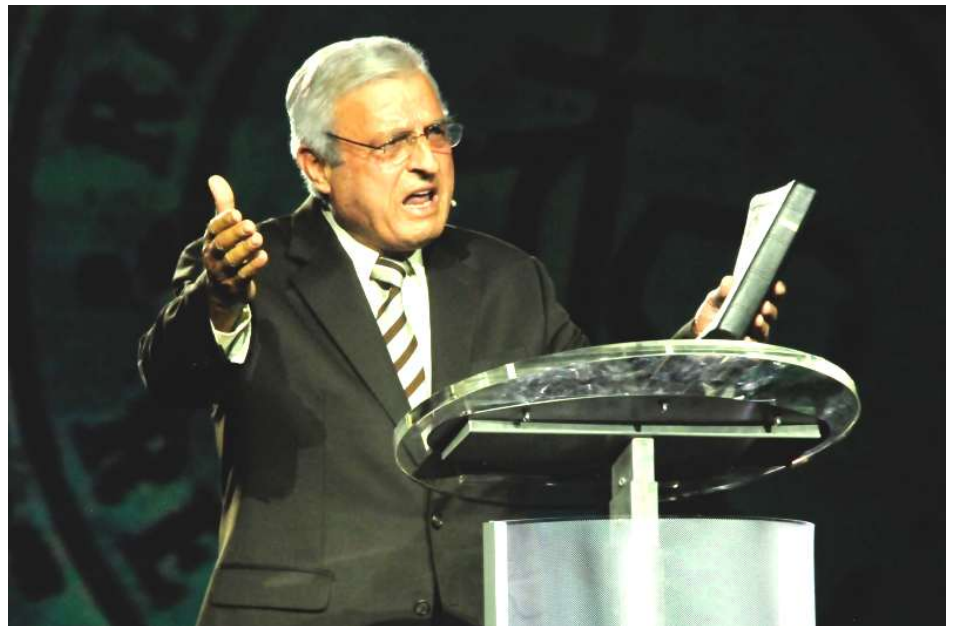
The General Assembly overflowed with multiple testimonies of God's goodness in times of trials and persecution that have stretched the faith of many of His servants. May you be encouraged and motivated to authentically live for our Saviour as you read the following story.

Sami's Testimony

Sami Dagher grew up in the Muslim country of Lebanon until he accepted Jesus as his personal Saviour. In 1971, he was invited to a conference in Amsterdam where Billy Graham preached, presenting the needs of Europe and the Middle East. At that time God called Sami into ministry.

Sami has been a bold witness in the Middle East for decades, during some of which the worst conflicts arose. Despite the turmoil, he continued planting churches during Lebanon's civil war, leading relief trips into Baghdad during the Iraq war, and establishing medical clinics, bible schools and an orphanage. But being a Christian serving God in a hostile Muslim country was anything but a walk in the park.

"If they want to kill us all, we are ready to die. But we are not going to close the clinic or the church. They don't want anyone to be converted to Christianity. They asked me to stop Muslims from coming to the church but I told them I could not



Sami Dagher spoke to the delegates from Romans 1:16 - "I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile."

“ Sami arrived home later that evening only to find his wife and son huddled in their room crying. “If you return to work tomorrow they will kill our son” cried Sami’s wife. ”

do that. The church is the house of God and anyone is allowed to come.”

These were Sami's words not long after one of the volunteer nurses working at one of his clinics, providing aid to Lebanese and Palestinian refugees, was shot in the head by militant terrorists after she answered a knock at the clinic door. Threats have not been uncommon to those who serve Christ beside Sami. Christian persecution is a reality they have always been aware of. Yet despite the persecution, the church in Iraq which started with only five people has grown so dramatically that they now meet in a large two-storey building. A sign on their building in the Muslim dominated country boldly proclaims Jesus is the light of the world. “The light of Christ is real. The story must be told.” says Sami.

While in Beirut, Sami had been providing aid and medical services to those injured in the ongoing civil and international conflicts. Many soldiers resented Sami and his work because he was serving not as a Muslim but as a Christian.

One evening, soldiers arrived at his home in Beirut. When his son opened the door, a soldier raised his rifle and pointed it at his head and said, “Tell your father we don't need his help and not to return anymore, or else we will come back and kill you”. Sami's wife ran towards the door as the soldiers were leaving.

Sami arrived home later that evening only to find his wife and son huddled in their room crying. “If you return to work tomorrow they will kill our son” cried Sami's wife. Sami spent the night praying in anguish and tears asking the Lord what he should do. To any normal person, the answer was clear – stop, don't go back anymore. But the words Sami kept hearing from the Lord were “Love your enemies, love your enemies”. The next day Sami hesitantly and fearfully continued on with his ministry to provide aid and medical attention to anyone who needed it. Later that evening, there was a knock on the door. Sami answered the door knowing who it might be. When he opened the door, the soldier pointed his gun at Sami's head and said “I told you not to come back”. His wife quickly jumped in front of the gun. Sami pushed his wife aside and said to the soldier, “If you are going to shoot, then shoot me”. He hoped that if the soldier shot him, then the soldiers will not harm his wife or son. Sami then uttered what could have been his last words to the soldier, “Even if you shoot me, I will still love you because Jesus still loves you”. Upon hearing those words, the soldier froze for a few seconds. The soldier then lowered his rifle and walked away.

In the midst of turmoil in a hostile environment, with violent threats and vandalism against the church, and the possibility of death at any time, stands a man that knows

where his life, his faith, and his eternal future lie. Some have described Sami as a man who pours more enthusiasm into his good morning than most people do in an entire conversation. He is a man who lives out Paul's instruction in its entirety: “Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, and faithful in prayer. Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. Bless those who persecute you, bless and do not curse.” (Romans 12:9-14).

Today Sami Dagher is the pastor at the Karantina Church in Beirut, Lebanon, president of the National Evangelical Christian and Missionary Alliance Church in Lebanon, founder of the Christian Alliance Institute of Theology in Beirut, and was also the pastor of the largest Protestant church in Baghdad. He plans to continue his ministry despite the constant threat of persecution. "Pray that we will have courage," he asks.

May God grant us all the same courage and boldness to be His witness and to know what it really means to live in full surrender to the true Lord and God of this universe.



Elder Janson Ho currently attends the Fraser Lands English congregation and has been attending and serving in different capacities at VCAC for over 25 years.

Happy Mother's Day



As we celebrate Mother's Day this Sunday, we would like to acknowledge and appreciate all of our mothers in our church. May God provide you with joy and peace in your heart on this special day. - Pastor Ivan Leung

A Mother's Prayer

1. Please Lord, help my children understand salvation and to receive Christ soon.
2. Please Lord, help my children acquire a discerning heart; a heart that despises evil and stays away from sins.
3. Please Lord, help my children acquire a true sense of responsibility in all relationships they forge.
4. Please Lord, teach my children to be respectful to their elders and those in authority.
5. Please Lord, grant my children a submissive heart; help them develop a true reliance on Christ and a zero tolerance for Satan.
6. Please Lord, protect my children in all aspects of their lives: fortify my children in their body, heart and spirit from Satan's attack.
7. Please Lord, protect my children; help them stay away from evil peer influence but draw them to faithful, benevolent friends in this sinful world.
8. Please Lord, protect my children from sexual temptations; help them maintain a pure, virgin, and holy pre-marital life.
9. Please Lord, grant my children a heart that seeks God's desire and wisdom in their choice of marriage partners; steer them away from wrong decisions.
10. Please Lord, protect my children; grant them steadfast love and a simple heart that is willing to serve only You.

"May my prayer be set before you like incense; may the lifting up of my hands be like the evening sacrifice."
- Psalm 141:2

May God grant the following eight blessings to all our hardworking, faithful mothers:

1. Blessed is the mother who understands her children, for her fond memories are abundant.
2. Blessed is the mother who knows how to console and encourage her children, for she will win her children's hearts.
3. Blessed is the mother who teaches her children to fear God, for she will never be lacking in peace and joy.
4. Blessed is the mother who trains her children to respect their elders, for she will enjoy the same respect from her children.
5. Blessed is the mother who acknowledges and values her children's strengths but overlooks their shortcomings, for she takes pride in her children's all-rounded healthy character development.
6. Blessed is the mother who prays fervently for her children daily, for she will witness their continual growth in wisdom and virtues.
7. Blessed is the mother who lives up to her faith, for she will be pleased by the positive attitudes of her children in facing life's challenges.
8. Blessed is the mother who encourages her children to pursue higher education, for she will be proud of their many contributions to society and God's Kingdom.