

Twinning with Tura'an

In June 2016, we were delighted to be able to enter into a twinning relationship with a Baptist church in Israel, which is located in the north near Nazareth and Canaa and is called Turan Baptist Church. The twinning relationship was facilitated by Baptist Twinning in Israel, a UK-based charity which aims to foster and deepen links between UK Baptist churches and those in Israel, and our brother and sisters in the Association of Baptist Churches in Israel - please have a look at their web sites for more information!

The pastor of the church at Turan is Ziad Farraj, and he responded to our invitation as follows:

"This is a great news to hear about Walsworth Road Baptist Church wanting to build a twinning relationship with Turaan Baptist Church. For us this is a prayer answer that we prayed for for many years and we had the faith that God will do it in the right time. This is another sign and a confirmation for us in Turaan Baptist Church, and for me, Ziad; and Saleem that God is leading us in this transition year. And for me especially this is an answer to a prayer that this kind of relationship will be clarified and built in the following months".

Leadership

Over the past year, Turaan Baptist Church has been in a transition of leadership, where Ziad began to take on more pastoral duties from his predecessor, Saleem. This transition will be continued under the direction of the spiritual committee of the Association of Baptist Churches in Israel, and with Saleem and his wife Andera's love and courage, and with the acceptance of the church members through God's anointing work.

The main worship meeting at Turaan is weekly at 6 PM every Saturday; with a prayer meeting is at 6 PM on Wednesday. There is a Youth Meeting at 6 PM on Fridays with a discipleship program once every two weeks for the older youth. There are two women's meetings for different age groups. There is a children's ministry too and an annual camp in the summer.

Working together until now, Ziad and Saleem and their wives have been leading the church, to be a loving church towards God and to his people, and to be ready to announce the Good News for the people around them in Turaan, both Christians and Muslims.

Biographies

Ziad is 40 years old in November 2018, and is married to Randa who is 34 years old. They have two children, Matthew who is 11 years old and Moraiah who is 7. Ziad has a Master's degree from the University of Haifa in special education and has been working as a teacher in Nazareth with children with special needs for the past 16 years. He finished his Bachelor of Divinity degree at NEC, the Nazareth-based Bible college, and has a degree approved by Spurgeon's College and Wales University. Randa serves with Ziad in the church and focuses her ministry with the children's work. Saleem and Andera have 3 girls and one boy. Two of their daughters have married and both of them serve the church leading the youth ministry and helping in the worship.

Location

Turan village is an old village located in Galilee. It is 10 minutes from Cana village in Galilee, and 15 minutes driving-distance from western Tiberias. 14 thousand people

currently live in the village, the big majority are Muslims, and only a minority are Christians, about 2-3 thousand. In Turaan there are three churches, Greek Catholics, Greek Orthodox and Baptist. Turaan Baptist Church has about 50 baptized members, but attending the main service there about 70-80 members, most are believers.

In general most people living in Turan work in the nearby towns or in Nazareth, which is 25 minutes by driving (without traffic!), or in Haifa which is 40 minutes away. Lately there has been a situation with newly-wed Christian couples, in that they leave Turaan and move to other towns, especially Nazareth and Nazareth Illit, trying to find better conditions to live in, regarding jobs, space and education.

History

Turaan village is a very old village, and is getting bigger every day; being renewed and expanded more and more. The first missionaries came from the USA and began the Baptist movement in the Holy Land. Shukry Musa, came in 1911 and established the first Baptist church in Nazareth. Turaan Baptist Church was founded by missionaries in the late 50s and early 60s. They started it as small home meetings. In about 1970 the church began to be established and to be located in Turaan by Rev. Suhail Ramadan (Saleem's father). He left his home in Nazareth and came and lived and served faithfully in the church in Turaan in difficult conditions and faced opposition for 35 years. So Turan Baptist Church is one of the oldest Baptist churches in the Holy Land!

After that Rev. Suhail got sick and retired and passed away. After that time of transition, Saleem and his wife led the church with help from Ziad and Randa for about 10 years. Both Saleem and his wife Andera, led the church in a very challenging time, after a time of division that they faced in the church. They did it faithfully and sincerely with a lot of tears and prayers. Without them standing firm and faithfully, with quiet and peaceful characters, the church couldn't have managed what it did. Saleem's wife Andera, worked very hard disciplining the women in the church to be Biblically rooted, prayer focused, and open to God's presence. This affected the whole church positively.

Please Pray For:

These are prayer requests received from Ziad, so please pray for the church at Turan:

- Please pray for Turan as to how we can be here as a church, not inward focused but also outward focused, so we can be the salt and light in Turaan and Galilee too, so we can lead the people to Christ.
- Our church budget and tithing is limited and doesn't cover even a part time pastor's salary. Please pray that God would provide so that Ziad can work less in a full time job and instead work as pastor to the church.
- In the last two years, we have invested a lot of money for the fixing of our old building which still needs fixing. The budget for this project is about 50 thousand dollars. We only have a small part of that amount.
- In our vision, the church building in the picture is going to be a key place for the strength of the ministry of the church, not only can it be used for the church services but also will be used for hosting guests and missionaries to help with the ministry. Also the guests can be taught about Christian Eastern orientation and we also we believe it's going to be a prayer centre. The number is big but we believe that God can provide the need through different ways.