

Opportunities for Service of Pakistani Christians in the Dispersion

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A. The significant of dispersions -the Biblical basis

1. **Dispersion because of political oppression:** The captivity of the exile of the Jews in Babylon in the 7th century BC. (Jeremiah 29:1-14). Imagine the influence of the Jews on the idolatrous Babylonians. They saw a people worshipping an invisible God. Note the influence of the exile in Babylon on the Jews. They developed synagogue worship in Babylon. A modern example of dispersion for political oppression are the Afghan refugees scattered all over the world.
2. **Dispersion because of economic pressure:** (1 Peter 1:1). Under economic pressure Jewish migrants settled in main cities around the Mediterranean Sea. EG: Alexandria in Egypt and Cyrene in Libya. They forgot their Hebrew and requested a translation of the Hebrew Old Testament into everyday Greek. Thus the famous Septuagint (LXX) was produced. God answered this Jewish request not only for their benefit but three centuries later the New Testament writers, writing in Greek could quote from the Septuagint quickly and easily. A modern example of dispersion for economic reasons is the Pakistanis in the oil lands.
3. **Dispersion because of religious persecution:** (Acts 8:1). Modern examples of dispersion for religious persecution are Iranian Christian particularly Bishop Daqqani Tafti who lives in exile.
4. **Dispersions because of missionary zeal :** (Acts 13: 1-3). Are there any Pakistanis dispersed for this reason? What are they doing?

B. Witness in a restricted situation:

1. **Establish what the situation really is:** What is the law for nationals and for foreigners? What happens in practice? What is the position of Christians? Of Christian literature? The Bible? Radio? Can meetings be held in halls? If not, where? Genesis 20:11; Hebrews 10:25 and Acts 4:19-21. Note the UN Charter of Human Rights.
Question: Is it always right to avoid trouble?

2. **Pray for key personal contacts with individuals:** (Acts 8:26-29).
Personal conversation and sharing is not illegal anywhere. Accept legitimate restrictions and trust God. Take a Bible or New Testament to give to someone. Pray very much as to whom to give it. Use Christ's example and the Apostle's example. They were guided by the Holy Spirit. The Acts of the Apostles is also called the Acts of the Holy Spirit. We see the living God in action. There is no where He cannot act. God will do something because you are there. Where God's people are, His spirit is at work- even in the deserts of Arabia and Libya.

3. **Avoid controversy:** Avoid offending by being drunk, improper dress or immorality. Remember pre-evangelism ie preparing the way by being present. For example some Saudi women know that all people are not Muslim and Libyans know that all Christians are not Western. Use opportunities for evangelism. Pakistanis can learn Arabic easily , are not watched as much as some other nationalities and are unselfconscious in witnessing.

4. **Be aware of the problems:** Limited length of stay, long hours of work, living in camps, disregard for rights (exploitation), fear of losing one's job, separation from family, increasing religious pressures, insecurity and uncertainty in the Gulf, no national church or a very small one.
Question: What preparation could you make in Pakistan before going to the Gulf?

How God is using the Pakistani dispersion today:

- Worship – house meetings
- Prayer for the places where they work- Jeremiah 29:7
- Witness through life- living letters – 2 Corinthians 3:1-3
- Witness through the Word – Matthew 12:34-35
- Money given for Christian work in Pakistan
- Development of spiritual gifts by laymen
- Promoting unity – fellowship with Christians from other lands – John 13:35
- Giving the Pakistani church at home a greater understanding of its own freedom and opportunities.