



BUILDING A SAFE COMMUNITY: FAMILY COUNSELLING CONFERENCE A RESOURCE FOR THE CHURCH IN CENTRAL ASIA. VENUE THE DIVITIA GRATIAE UNIVERSITY CHISINAU MOLDOVA OCTOBER 25 TO 30 2021

Background to the need

Thirty years after the collapse of the Empire of atheism and discrimination, the Central Asian Native Christian Community is experiencing both a spiritual revival and a growing social role in society.

On the one hand, a spiritual renaissance took place with the fall of the USSR, and as a result, a new Christian community was born in Central Asia among Uzbeks, Tajiks, Kyrgyz, Uighurs, Kazakhs, Turkmen, Tatars and so on. The Christian community among these ethnic groups had disappeared 500 years ago and did not exist in a legal form from the 15th century until the end of the 20th century. In the last 30 years in Central Asia, a community of about 50,000 Christians from the above-mentioned nations emerged and developed. Looking at the overall population of this region however, which counts more than 200 million people, this Christian community is fragile and vulnerable.



On the other hand, the Christian community in Central Asia is currently experiencing a real challenge, caused by the influence of Islamic fundamentalism, propagating the polygamous family. The practice had been banned throughout the USSR, including in post-Soviet Central Asian countries.

In these 30 years, the effects of polygamous marriages have seen a rapid increase in abandoned children, human trafficking, and the growth of prostitution. This has greatly affected the Christian community. There are now many women in churches who are second or third wives in a polygamous family which are in need of help in all kinds of matters. Pastors of the Christian Community are

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facing an avalanche of cases, with many people in the church accepting polygamous marriages. This is because in many churches there is a lack of training in family education and counselling. A few years ago, pastors from Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Azerbaijan and Tajikistan approached us with a request to organize some family education conferences to look at what the Bible has to say on the matter. The family has been the first institution created by God. It was and is the core of society. The development and prosperity of every nation is dependent on the attitude people have towards the family. The family was according to Scripture, the first institution created by God. It was and is the core of society. The development and prosperity of every nation is dependent on the attitude people have towards the family.

Previous attempts at organizing such a conference have had to be abandoned due to the Covid 19 pandemic. However, now the situation related to the pandemic has relaxed and International travel is possible, the UDG Research Centre is organizing a Family Counselling Conference on October 25-30 2021. Eighteen Central Asian pastoral couples have been invited to participate in the conference.

The family is the core of society - The role and importance of counselling for the Christian community in post-Soviet Central Asia

As a result of repeated requests from churches in Central Asia for support in this area and in recognition of the importance of the family and the challenges facing the family today, the Islamic Studies Research Centre at the Divitia Gratiae University, is organizing this Conference.

Key note speakers at the conference are:

Omar Zook, USA, B.S. in sociology M.A. of social work, M.A. in religion. Specialized in Family Counseling. Licensed Counselor – pastor for 35 years in FECH Church.

Sara Bishop, UK. Counsellor & psychotherapist working with individual adults and couples. She is an EMDR trained therapist which is a special training for trauma, also a trainer of counsellors BACP accred and MBPsS. A member of All Saints Church, Crowborough.

Mihai Malancea (Ph.D.), Republic of Moldova, specialized in Biblical Theology of the Family

Ludmila Caragia (MA), Republic of Moldova, specialized in the rehabilitation of divorced families.

Mariana Iorgu, (MA) specialized in Counselling and prevention of burnout.

Conference Budget - £30,528

This is broken down into the following

£20,365- This covers the cost of flight expenses for all 18 Pastors' families and leaders from evangelical churches in Central Asia.

£7,420 To cover the cost of providing- food, and accommodation, and daily transportation to the conference

£2,743- To pay for COVID-19 tests (Each couple is required to take two tests)

We need your prayer support and financial help.

By today the money for the Central Asian trips has been collected. The £20,365 for the air fares has been raised and the tickets have been bought.

The funds needed for the COVID tests. Has also been raised.

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Total raised as of 15 October 2021 ££23,108

We still need to raise -£7420, for accommodation, meals, coffee breaks between sessions and transportation expenses from and to the Airport.

Please note that expenses for the speakers have already been covered.

Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain. – 1 Corinthians 15:58

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