



# *Our National Messiah*

## *Mission to Turkey*

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My wife and I are deeply grateful to God and True Parents for the privilege of representing them to the people of Turkey, whom we have grown to love deeply.

As representatives of Christianity to this Muslim nation, the course of overcoming historical resentment of both Muslims and Christians has been painful and difficult. In my case I have an ancestor who fought against Turkey's Ottoman Empire in an important naval battle. The King of Spain decorated him for bravery.

Saint Paul preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ in what was then the Roman province of Asia, now present-day Turkey. The land is drenched with the blood and tears of many martyrs. I made a pilgrimage to the seven churches mentioned in Revelations, all located in Turkey. Paul, who was born in present day Turkey, preached to many of the early Christian communities. I visited churches secreted away in caves, escaping Roman persecution, and stadiums where they were martyred. I could not help shedding tears for these brave souls, and wonder to this day if I could endure what they did.

And yet, today Turkey has few Christians (close to 99 percent are Muslim). Every morning on my way to teach English, I would pass the great domed cathedral of Haghia Sophia, which was for centuries the largest Christian



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church (until St. Peter's in Rome was built). I could not help feeling the deep historical pain of the Christians who "lost" Haghia Sophia to the Muslim invaders. To this day, they refuse to use the Turkish name for the city, preferring to call it Constantine's city—Constantinople.

The Christians of this great cathedral prayed for deliverance from the Turkish invaders, but they were all slaughtered in the very pews in which they prayed.

As National Messiah's we have been chosen to bear this historical resentment, and not be overcome by it. If we cannot do this, we condemn those who dwell in the hell of historical bitterness and hatred with no hope of liberation.

Divine Principle teaches us that Islam came about to correct the mistakes of Christianity, such as the deification of Jesus. But the Church refused to reform, and Heavenly Father allowed them to be struck by the Muslims.

Only through the Principle can we understand this. My Turkish students were shocked to learn that we teach that Jesus was a man, and not God. The Principle explanation of the "Trinity," and the "Four Position Foundation" showing that God is one, resonates easily with Muslims.

