



# ANTALYA İNCİL KİLİSESİ

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## Project: Antalya Evangelical Churches Association Evangelistic Outreach and Biblical Education/Discipleship Training Centre

**Part 1 of the Project:** Purchase of space for Evangelistic Outreach and Biblical Education/Discipleship Training Centre

**Purchased in May 2024 – thanks to your prayers and donations!**

**(please see all the details of the project below)**

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### Part 2 of the Project: Restore, repairs and interior decoration

In order to open up the Centre, it needs all kind of repairs and changes in order to separate rooms for the Café and Education Centre. Also of course the Café and the other rooms need to be furnished.

#### The restoration and repairs will include:

- 8.000,00 USD – Electricity work
- 11.000,00 USD - General restoration (walls, floors, tiles, bathrooms)
- 9.500,00 USD - workers fees
- 20.000,00 USD - Change Windows
- 58.000,00 USD - Cabinet and carpenter works

#### The interior decoration will include:

- 20.000,00 USD - Furniture for the Café and Education room (chairs, tables, lamps etc)
- 3.500,00 USD - Industrial coffee machine and Tea machine
- 20.000,00 USD - All Café kitchen related furniture and machines (industrial dish washer, Oven, refrigerator counter for cakes, refrigerators, freezer etc.)
- 14.000,00 USD - Café utensils (plates, cups, glasses, cutlery, table cloth etc.) 14.000 USD
- 1.000,00 USD - 2 TVs

#### Part 2 - Project Cost:

**Total Project Cost: 165.000 USD**

The Antalya Evangelical Church leaders and members ask for support for this 2<sup>nd</sup> part of the project, after purchasing the space – the sooner we can open up, the faster we can start with outreach and training effective leaders and servants.

It will strengthen the Antalya churches to educate and disciple our members.

***Any support in prayer and/or donations will bring the Antalya Evangelical Churches closer to achieving its vision. Thank you and God bless you!***

For donations, please use this link - People International

<https://interland3.donorperfect.net/weblink/weblink.aspx?name=E105477&id=2>

Designation: 935 Antalya Church

## Project Context and History

In 1992, a small group of Turkish-speaking believers started gathering together to worship God in a private home. Between 1992 and 1999, this house church grew to about 22 people. These believers desired to spread the gospel message throughout the city of Antalya, which at that time had a population of around 500,000. (Today the population of Antalya is 2.5 million.) Reaching such a large city for Christ was a huge task for a small handful of people. There were social pressures in those years that made this vision even more difficult. Perhaps the biggest obstacle at that time was that the church did not have a visible presence. Without a church building, most people were unaware of the existence of a Christian church in Antalya.

In 1997, an American couple established an international, English-speaking church to serve visiting tourists, as well as expats living in Antalya. Naming it the St. Paul Cultural Centre this church constructed a building and opened it in 1999. At this time, the Turkish church (which previously met in homes) started to pay rent and use the Cultural Centre for church services and other activities. Now gathering in a central place, the church community began to expand as its visibility attracted many new people. This building gave the Turkish church an identity within greater society. News was spread about this new Christian presence by media and word of mouth. Some of the news was positive and some was negative. However, both types aroused curiosity and many more people came to see the church for themselves. There was never this kind of exposure to the general public when the church was meeting in homes. The building changed everything for the Turkish church. It became much more than just a meeting space; it became an effective tool for spreading the gospel message.

In addition to the visible presence of a church, its numbers continued to grow as a result of evangelistic outreach activities. Being centrally located, many people were able to find easy public transport to the building. The Christian community also began to grow spiritually through church services, Bible studies, prayer meetings, and discipleship programs. By 2011, the church had grown to 120 people, most of whom had converted from Islam to Christianity. At this time the church pastors and elders developed a vision to grow the church further. This vision was to proclaim the gospel message to those who have not heard, to make disciples of Jesus Christ, to equip church members to serve the community, and to plant churches in areas where there are none. By prayer and faith, the church leaders were intentional about implementing new strategies to spread the gospel message, offer Biblical training to believers, and appoint qualified people to work towards its greater vision.

After raising enough funds, in 2016 the church completed its goal of establishing a second “ location in a different part of Antalya. A building was constructed on the east side of the city in a residential area and the Antalya Evangelical Church congregation divided into two. This division led to additional growth as more people began attending both church locations. By 2020, the church had developed a vision to establish a third location on the west side of Antalya. However, because of the Covid-19 pandemic this had to be postponed. During this time, the St. Paul Cultural Centre bought land in a very strategic part of west Antalya. A second Culture Centre has been completed and is used from the international church and we are renting space for our 3<sup>rd</sup> location since spring 2023. This cultural centre is located right next to the largest university in Antalya, it is expected to attract many students that live and study in the area. we have now 2 youth group meetings in both locations “the old town” and Konyaaltı (the west of Antalya). The Turkish church has faith that this new location will grow quickly and it is already showing.

Looking to the future and planning further expansion, the Antalya Evangelical Churches are praying about establishing a fourth Turkish church in the next three years. This would be in a more conservative area of northern Antalya called Kepez. Then, after strengthening and growing the existing churches in Antalya, the long-term goal is to expand to other cities in Turkey where there is no church presence. As part of this greater vision of expansion, the Antalya Evangelical Churches would like to present a project intended to reach toward this goal to spread the gospel message to the unreached people of Turkey.

### **Aim for Outreach and Training Centre:**

**To spread the gospel and provide Biblical training in a central location of Antalya where pedestrian traffic is heavy and public transportation is easily accessible.**

Between the years of 2000 and 2013, Antalya Evangelical Church was granted permission from the local government to hold several different types of outreach activities in crowded streets and parks throughout the city. The city also provided police protection for Christians during these events. Public attention was attracted by small concerts or dramas put on by church members and volunteers. Christian books and Bibles were distributed, and passersby were invited to the church. These events were opportunities for the church to have an even greater visible presence in the community.

During those years, it was a priority for the Turkish government to allow the practice of religious freedom because Turkey was hoping to become part of the European Union. These kinds of events were also seen as something that might have helped revive tourism as it painted a positive picture of religious acceptance in the city. However, after 2013, the local government stopped giving the church permission to hold these events in public spaces (except in enclosed auditoriums). There are several possible factors that may explain this shift, such as the government becoming more conservative about Islam, terrorism, a government coup attempt, and the Covid-19 pandemic.

Since 2013, after repeatedly being denied permission for these kinds of activities, the church has been looking for other opportunities for public evangelistic outreach. One option that has worked well is renting auditoriums and hotel conference rooms for Christmas and Easter services. Social media presence has been expanded and is highly effective. Additionally, the church has offered small clubs that meet in public cafes and other cultural outreach events.

After much prayer and consideration, church leaders developed the idea of opening a storefront in central Antalya to overcome the limitations the church currently faces with open evangelistic outreach. With clear signage, a storefront in a place with heavy pedestrian traffic will indicate to passersby that it is a Christian Centre. In front of the store, a table full of Bibles and other Christian material will be set up and freely distributed to those who are interested. Guests can be hosted inside and there will be someone at the storefront daily to share the gospel message with them.

The faith-interested people met through this storefront can then be directed to the church location which is most convenient for them to attend, therefore furthering the growth of the Antalya Evangelical Churches.

The storefront will act as a small cafe and library, and as a place to buy, sell, or trade second-hand books. It can be an attractive place for young people to meet and a way to help support them in their research and education.

The storefront will also be a place to foster building relationships with people through English language practice clubs. Native English-speaking short-term volunteers can offer their services this way. Skilled volunteers can also offer other classes, such as basic music and art.

The cafe environment can be a place where people come to meet their friends. Hot and cold drinks and desserts will be sold cheaply without the aim of commercial profit. This will make it an attractive place for students and others who are living on a tight budget.

## **Biblical Education/Discipleship Training**

Besides evangelistic outreach, Antalya Evangelical Church focuses on training members and leaders in Biblical education and theology. The distance between the three church locations is quite far. As renters in two of the church locations, the church does not have the freedom to use those spaces as needed. There are set times that the church can meet in those buildings because other groups use the space and many other events are scheduled there. Additionally, most church members use public transportation. Depending on where they live in the city it is not always easy for them to get to the one church location at which Biblical trainings can be easily scheduled. Unfortunately, this transportation issue often causes these classes and seminars to be lightly attended. With a Biblical Education/Discipleship Training Centre on a street in central Antalya where public transportation is easily accessible, the number of people that will participate in these classes and seminars will go up. This will, in turn, allow more leaders, teachers, pastors, and ministers to be trained and prepared for ministry in a shorter amount of time.

According to the laws of Turkey, it is currently not possible to establish a Bible school or any type of theology training program in Turkey. It is very important to the Antalya Evangelical Church to provide opportunities to raise up and train leaders who are able to serve in Turkish churches. This has been a priority to the church since its beginning. Fortunately, the church has had the opportunity to train leaders by collaborating with organizations that prepare Biblical training courses, programs, and materials. Because of these education programs, ministry group leaders and pastors have been better prepared to serve more effectively. Continuing to provide these opportunities, especially in an easy-to-access location, can give more leaders the opportunity to be trained without having to leave the country to attend Bible school.

The Biblical training mentioned above is a general level program offered to those who want to both mature and grow in their faith and/or be prepped for serving in the church. This program takes four to five years to complete for learners who, at the same time, have other jobs and responsibilities. In addition to this program, the church would like to offer a one-year academic level Bible education program for students who want to attend from the churches in Antalya, as well as students from other cities in Turkey. While studying, these students can also work as interns in the Antalya churches or at the training centre itself. In this way, students can further their education by applying what they learn in practical service. Antalya Evangelical Churches would continue to work with the organizations with which it currently cooperates. The church is grateful for these organizations that provide teachers, classes, and training materials all in the Turkish language.

This outreach and Biblical training centre storefront will also provide an alternative venue for church members to visit and fellowship with others, as well as provide a potential place for volunteers to serve.

This location, which will be opened under the Antalya Bible Churches Association, will allow these services to be provided openly, without being hidden, as it is in accordance with the law.