



***Ihsan Ozbek – Pastor and National Leader of Foursquare Turkey
Creating Resources for a Growing Church***

Hi! I am Ihsan Ozbek. I pastor a church in Ankara, Turkey and I am the National Leader of Foursquare, Turkey. Today, I'd like to speak about creating resources for a growing church. In 1996, I became the pastor of our church. Turkey is still an unreached nation. And in those days, we had 4 million of people in our city, Ankara. And there was only one Evangelical Church with 35 members. But my vision was to plant churches, and I shared my vision with the church. I said we will plant churches in Ankara and outside Ankara, and in every part of Turkey. And we wanted to send missionaries to other nations. They said it's a dream. And this dream was a difficult one to fulfill. There was a lack of funds, and another difficulty, we didn't have enough mature leaders. But we started to think about that. How could we deal with this difficulties?

First thing we did was **starting a ministry school**. We started to train our members as evangelists and church-planters. Then, we start thinking about **creating resources**. One day, one of my American friends brought me a box of granola. In those days we didn't have granolas in Turkey. We did every kind of cereals but there was no granola. I like granola and I said this will work in Turkey and we started a small granola factory with five employees, and this created jobs for our members and at the same times it was good resources for income. But market was very tough, and they forced us to grow. We were working with huge supermarket chains and we were competing with big brands like Nestle, Kellogg's, and we had to decide -we could grow, and I would be a businessman, or we could quit, and I would continue as the leader of the church. And I decided to continue as a pastor. We had to sell that business to another person, and we could create other ways to raise funds.

With that money, I bought a travel agency. And in those days, we didn't have a coverage for our church. In Turkey, there was no legal system for churches. There is no identity entity as church, so there was only one option, we could have a company and we would do our everything under that company. So we used our travel business as an umbrella for our denomination. We were a growing church, and we needed that structure for accountability reasons and as an entity for our church. But in a few years, I realized that travel visitors could work for our church and **we started to organize tools**, small tools at the beginning. Then **we started to organize conferences**, Christian conferences in Turkey. Because Turkey is a great place for tourism. We have lots of wonderful summer resorts and we have great historical places. For example, for Christian tourists, we have the seven churches of Revelation. We have Cappadocia, we have the homeland, Haran, homeland of Abraham. And homeland of Paul -Apostle Paul-Tarsus. Even Mount Ararat is in Turkey.

So we started to create tools for Christian tourists and it started to grow. So we used that income to **start churches and send workers**. At the beginning we had only one church, but now we have 35 churches in 26 different provinces. And we were able to send missionaries to Kurdistan. Last year, we were able to send two ladies to Kurdistan as missionaries. They're working in a small young Baptist Church there and they're doing worship, creating worship videos. And this year, two months ago, we were able to send our couple, one of our house leaders to Moldova. They will be working among Turkish-speaking people in Moldova. There is a small minority there.

So, **our small church became a missionary-sending church organization**. We created a mission organization called SUNAK(Altar). And we are organizing everything under that organization now. But COVID hit us terribly. Last year, we were not able to send one tour. Even, we were not able to do one small gathering for the Christian conference. So, we were thinking about creating other resources. I looked around and started to think and I bought 150 sheep. We were called to be fishermen of men, but at the same time, we were called to be shepherds. So, I have a flock of sheep and in a few months, we will be able to receive funds from husbandry.

God is good and He wants to see people in Turkey. Our Lord wants to see a church in Turkey, and He is using every kind of believers to reach this nation. So we are working and partnering with other evangelical organizations as well. But creating resources for this growing church is a huge task, but the need is huge. We need to send workers to Turkey. There are lots of provinces in Turkey and there are there is not a single believer in those provinces. Our Lord wants to enable us to reach our country. Resources is not a huge problem. He will provide if you try to find them, they are there. Thank you for listening. God bless you.