

## *Shepherd's Heart Retreat—a new beginning!*

It did not take long after the beginning of Entrust's ministry in the Middle East in 2004 to realize the vast number of cultural issues that divide the young church in this strategic region: differences of tribal and religious backgrounds, language, and political affiliations. The main problem is a



*The Middle East is a fertile land in many ways.*

deep suspicion of anyone who is not part of one's own group. Thus we generally found small numbers of believers of one particular group meeting together with an intense loyalty to one leader. Into this complex cultural context, Entrust began to teach and mentor both men and women, helping them grow in their appreciation of the one body of Christ.

Over the months God began to grow a vision in the heart of one dedicated Entrust staff member for a family retreat. At this "Shepherd's Heart" Retreat, diverse members of Jesus' church would find refreshment in body and soul and have the opportunity to interact with believers of

different backgrounds. It became clear that God would have to bring this about because it was beyond human doing. But the vision was shared and people began to pray. A staff of over 20 internationals (some from Entrust, some from U.S. churches) made plans to come into the region to help with everything from logistics, to sharing the Word, to serving the needs of the women and children.

God blessed in **huge** ways! 137 nationals came together for four wonderful days of refreshment and ministry to one another. Along with celebrating Nawroz, a holiday celebrating the local New Year (March 21st), people from diverse backgrounds talked and ate with each other, had fun together, prayed with and for each other, and served communion to each other. It was indeed a God-planted and watered dream come true! Just one of the great blessings was to hear of the commitment to Jesus made by a formerly unbelieving wife of one of the church leaders in attendance. Beyond this are many other blessings and provisions from God that will not even be known until eternity.

Nevertheless, our struggle is not against flesh and blood, and the enemy will do everything possible to kill the seeds of unity and harmony planted at this retreat. Please pray for those seeds to find good soil and germinate into strong, healthy relationships that bear much fruit.

**"Prayer itself is an art which only the Holy Spirit can teach us.  
Pray for prayer. Pray until you can really pray!"**

**C. H. Spurgeon**