

on the horizon

..... Horizons International Newsletter – April 2021



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DISCIPLESHIP

IN LEBANON AND BEYOND

IN THIS ISSUE:

RELIEF WORK
PRODUCES NEW
DISCIPLES

MEC EXPANDS TO
RAISE UP NEW
LEADERS

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AUDIOBOOK!



SHAHED

A REFUGEE'S TESTIMONY

My name is Shahed, and I am thirteen years old. I grew up in a Muslim family in Idlib, Syria, but because of the civil war **my family and I had to leave and make a life in Beirut as refugees.** While living as a refugee is very difficult, I am thankful that our new home has allowed me to attend Horizons International's School of Hope for the last two years.

Attending a Bible class at school was hard for me at first, because I didn't want to hear anything about Christianity, and my parents are strict Muslims. But I often have questions that bother me, like, who controls the universe? And how can God be three persons? My teachers are very patient to answer my questions, and **I am starting to feel more comfortable with learning how Jesus works in my life.**

Recently, my nephew fell from a third-story apartment balcony. They rushed him to the hospital, where he lay in a coma for ten days. The doctors said he would probably not survive, and would be severely disabled if he did. My older sister sobbed constantly as she watched over her son.

As my nephew struggled to live, I was thankful that my teachers at school offered comfort and understanding. **Also, my cousin, who attends the School of Hope with me, suggested we pray for him.** She told me that God is a God of miracles, and that I should never stop believing. So our teachers prayed with me for my nephew, and he did wake up. He was unable to eat or talk for several days, but **we kept praying—and now he has fully recovered!**

I decided to testify to what God had done for my family at the School of Hope Christmas party in December. **I was very scared, but I shared in front of the whole school!** I cried with gratitude as I thanked the Lord for what He had done, in front of all the teachers and students. I want everyone to know that God healed my nephew!

Please pray for me to do well in my studies and grow in my understanding of Jesus at the School of Hope.*

**This story was translated from Arabic and adapted to first person.*

GLOBAL UPDATES

KOSOVO

At Messiah Evangelical Fellowship (MEF), Horizons' partner church in Kosovo, Muslim-background church members are responding to the call of missions. **Six church members are joining church plants** in the cities of Gjilan and Fushë Kosovë, and ministry leaders are actively **planting new churches** in the city of Kamenica. A further three congregants are being trained to be sent out, and two American couples are joining MEF to serve in missions.



INTERNATIONAL STUDENT MINISTRY (ISM)

As the spring semester advances, ISM staff have continued to innovate through online programs. In Denver, staff have encountered a surge of gospel interest during **bi-weekly Zoom Bible studies** that engage students, immigrants, and refugees in the US, and as far away as China and Angola! Denver staff have also started sending Bibles, gospel literature, and personal notes of encouragement to former students who have moved to other areas.

In Lincoln, Nebraska, staff have made exciting new connections with groups of people from Bangladesh, Kazakhstan, and Pakistan. Other ISM locations have adapted to public gathering restrictions by conducting **student discipleship through small online groups.** Pray that the gospel would continue to impact their lives!

HONG KONG

As Hong Kong's government has instituted aggressive school closures aimed at curbing the spread of COVID-19, Horizons International Asia has launched a **laptop donation program to benefit school-age children from Muslim families.** Along with ongoing gospel mentorship, these computers help bridge a practical gap for families whose children are missing out on their normal educational routine. **So far, Horizons has provided laptops to eight families.**

Horizons International Asia has adapted to current restrictions on public gatherings by forming smaller outreach groups for street evangelism. There have been many opportunities to pray with people, engage through in-depth conversations, and distribute gospel literature.



RELIEF WORK PRODUCES NEW DISCIPLES

Last year, Horizons faced a huge problem as Lebanon began descending into crisis. The Horizons community responded generously, enabling us to provide help to thousands of suffering families. Today, through the Lebanon Crisis Fund, **697** people are receiving in-home discipleship, and **337** have professed faith in Christ!

January 2020 - Amid Lebanon's economic collapse, families run out of food, and social media are flooded with images of empty refrigerators and shelves. Horizons starts bread package distribution to partner churches for in-need refugee and Lebanese families.

February 2020 - The outbreak of COVID-19 and subsequent lockdowns prompt Horizons to launch the Coronavirus Emergency Relief Fund (CERF). This project mobilizes Horizons staff to visit families, providing critical food and health supplies and home sanitization.

August 2020 - Horizons responds to the devastating explosion in Beirut by expanding CERF into the comprehensive Lebanon Crisis Fund (LCF), which distributes food, renovates damaged homes and churches, and supplies emergency medical and infant care items to families in need.

This growing project has already reached more than 19,000 people with the gospel. Many communities in Beirut know the Horizons team as the "Jesus is with you" people, because their shirts bear that message. Refugees in Lebanon have always been accepting of help—but now, even the traditionally self-sufficient local Lebanese population has opened their doors to critical aid, welcoming staff members into their homes to teach them about Jesus.

During in-home discipleship, gifted evangelists from partner churches and Horizons staff sit with families to hear their stories, pray for them, share the Word, and give families Bibles. **Currently, 58 local partner churches are following up with families**, while Horizons continues to adapt to ever-changing needs, such as replacing damaged appliances, sanitizing homes, and even loaning out oxygen machines to local churches for members who have contracted COVID-19.

God led Horizons to create what is now the Lebanon Crisis Fund so that we could tangibly demonstrate the free love of Jesus to communities in need of recovery. We praise God that **this initiative is already producing a harvest of souls who want to know Christ**—and God willing, we look forward to many more!



Horizons staff members lead an in-home Bible study for a Lebanese couple



TESTIMONIES FROM HORIZONS TEAM MEMBERS

"While visiting George Khalil, Rania and I explained how we have assurance that we are going to heaven because of God's salvation in our lives. He shared afterwards how he felt so much peace for the first time. He wants to come to church with us to learn more about Jesus, and we prayed the prayer of salvation with him. He was full of joy."

"Annie Yetiniyan, an elderly lady our team visited, shared how she has lived in an evangelical community all her life, but never experienced Jesus as her personal Savior and Lord. When we followed up with her, she prayed with all her heart to give her life to Jesus. She is so happy that God sent us to push her toward taking this important step in her life."

"Christine came to the MEC Cafe for help, crying hopelessly because of issues with her husband. Our team came to her house to help with renovation, where she opened up about her past. We told her about Jesus, and we led her through the prayer of salvation. She has been reading the Bible everyday and feels the presence of God while reading. She has been sharing how Jesus changed her life with everyone around her."

697 PEOPLE CURRENTLY BEING DISCIPLED

4,428 SEEKERS HEARD THE GOSPEL AT HORIZONS' CENTERS

236 MUSLIM-BACKGROUND WOMEN PROCLAIMED FAITH

18,000 BIBLES DISTRIBUTED TO SEEKERS

1.16M SEEKERS EXPOSED TO BIBLICAL TRUTH ON SOCIAL MEDIA

2,000+ SEEKERS RECEIVING HOUSE VISITS AND BIBLE STUDIES

SUPPORT
the Lebanon Crisis Fund today:
horizonsinternational.org/lebanoncrisis
Stay up-to-date on LCF News!
[@HorizonsPDE](https://www.facebook.com/HorizonsPDE) on Facebook
and Instagram



MEC EXPANDS TO RAISE UP NEW LEADERS

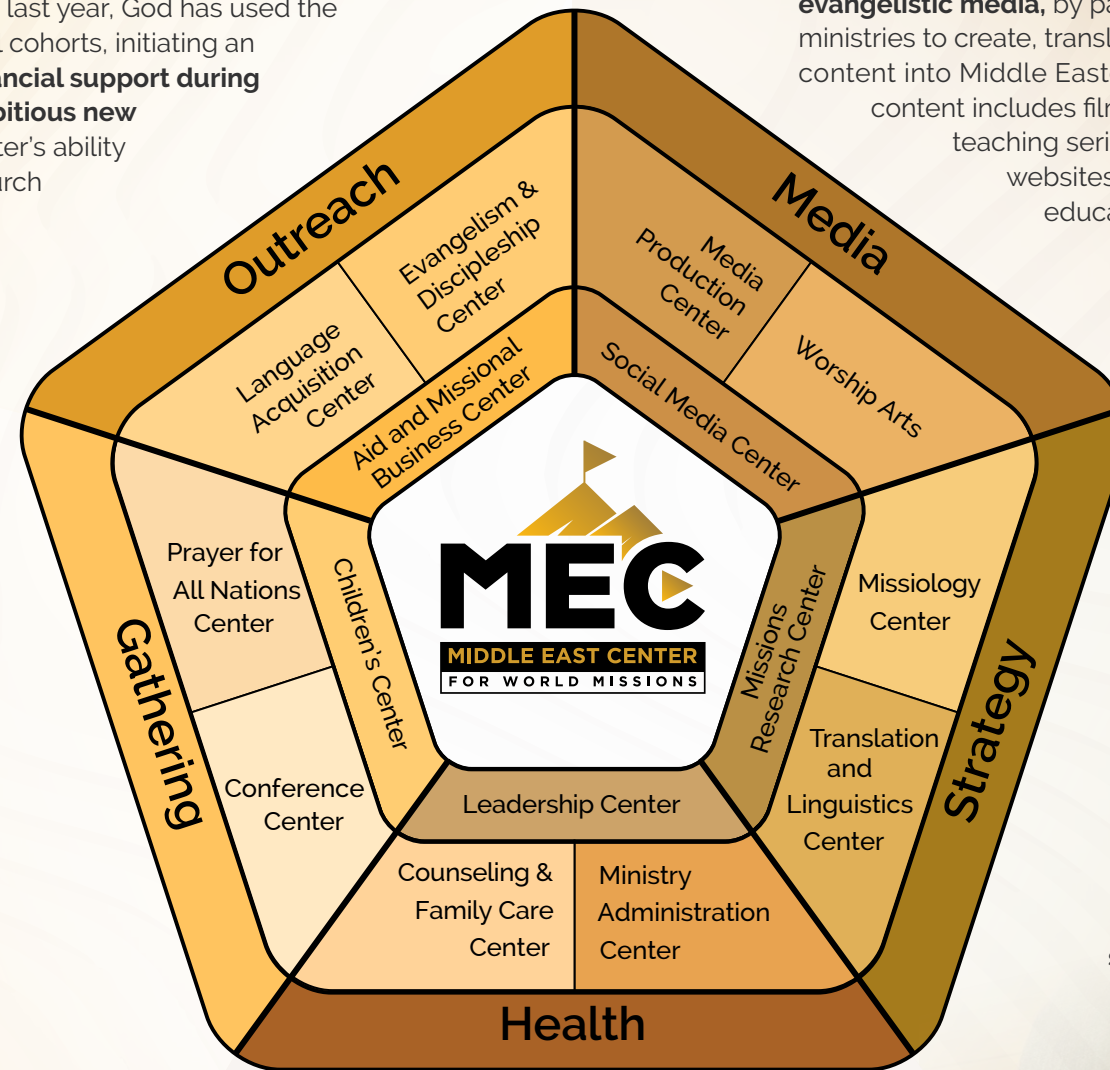
Since its launch in 2019, the MEC has been laying the foundations of its 15 centers, each representing specialized ministry skills needed to fulfill the Great Commission. Through projects such as Engaging Islam training, gospel social media platforms, Lebanese church empowerment, and hosting missions teams, **the MEC has already been established as a Middle East hub for international missions.** In the last year, God has used the unprecedented challenges in Lebanon to catalyze the formation of virtual cohorts, initiating an exciting new chapter in the MEC's story. **Horizons partners' generous financial support during our 2020 Matching Grant has enabled the MEC to launch an ambitious new expansion campaign** that will greatly increase the center's ability to serve both the local and international church community.

LANGUAGE ACADEMY OF BEIRUT (LAB)

The LAB was established in early 2020 to help global students develop literacy in Arabic, English, French, Kurdish, and Spanish. In late 2020, the LAB's new Beirut facility was completed, and is now equipped with **9 classrooms** for equipping internationals as well as Lebanese nationals and Syrian refugees. **Currently, a team of 15 language instructors teaches 25 students!**

LAB offers online language lessons to anyone hoping to develop Arabic language skills for ministry or personal development. **Income from international students will be used to subsidize lessons for local students in Beirut who cannot afford them.**

Want to learn Arabic? Contact us now!
lab@middleeastcenter.org



MEC CREATIVE

Over the last year, a **16-member media team** of staff and volunteers have built the MEC Creative, a virtual cohort that produces engaging Middle Eastern Christian media.

The MEC Media Center is building a global media production team to meet the increasing demand for evangelistic media, by partnering with international ministries to create, translate, and dub Christian content into Middle Eastern languages. This content includes films, documentaries, teaching series, books, articles, websites, and theological educational materials.



MEC TECH AND DESIGN INTERNSHIPS

At the MEC, Horizons staff members design and build websites, such as *arlingtonstatement.org* and *pureheart.tv*. Building on their expertise, the MEC has launched a paid coding and web development internship that will equip Middle Easterners with tech industry skills and knowledge, and offer course graduates in-house employment within the MEC. **Already, the 10-person program has received 35 applicants!**

Horizons plans to develop the MEC Media Center into a comprehensive design, web, and app development house. Projects will be undertaken in collaboration with the MEC Creative team and Horizons' communications team. These projects **empower Middle Eastern tech professionals to serve the Kingdom** by helping global churches spread the gospel online.



MEC CARE

Horizons recently launched **MEC Care**—a team that trains local church leaders and members in counseling, trauma care, inner healing, marriage, family dynamics, communication, and more. Church leaders and members who partner with MEC Care are working together to **identify areas of spiritual or emotional need within their individual congregations, and to develop the skills and strategies to effectively address them.**

MEC Care has already begun providing strategic support to churches through a regular discussion group. This group comprises **28 members representing 12 churches,** and more churches are expected to join or form new discussion groups. As group members identify their needs, Horizons staff will work with them to access resources and training to grow their member care abilities.

Watch our February digital roundtable:
"ANTIOCH OF THE MIDDLE EAST: MEC EXPANSION"
horizonsinternational.org/roundtables

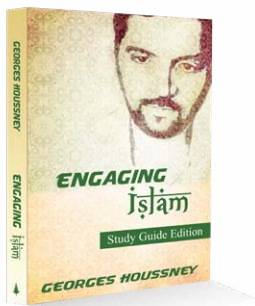


AVAILABLE SOON!

ENGAGING ISLAM AUDIOBOOK

Since its publication in 2010, Georges Housney's book *Engaging Islam* has sold more than **22,000 copies**—and it will soon be released in audiobook format! As part of a larger initiative to extend the reach and impact of training materials for ministry among Muslims, the audiobook will be available on multiple platforms.

Engaging Islam has equipped thousands of Christians worldwide with **unique insights drawn from Georges' three decades of fruitful experience in witnessing to Muslims in the Middle East and across the globe**. Widely revered among the evangelical community, it has even been selected as a key textbook for courses on Islam at several Bible schools.



Those who purchase the audiobook will hear Georges' own story, narrated by Georges Housney himself, on convenient platforms such

as **Audible, Hoopla, and iMusic**. Through this new digital format, Horizons hopes to reach a greater audience and inspire a new generation of believers to reach Muslims through effective evangelism and discipleship.

Also launched this year is the **online Engage Muslims with Christ Course**, which is hosted online through Horizons' partnership with the Rocky Mountain Bible College. This course, which launched online on March 1, 2021, comprises **ten interactive lessons from the Engaging Islam curriculum**. It equips individuals and church groups with practical training in a sound biblical approach, empowering believers for fruitful ministry to Muslims—and now, attendees can attend from their locales, on their own schedules.



Registration Link:
engagecourse.org/take-engage-course-online

Learn more about the audiobook:

horizonsinternational.org/engaging-islam-audiobook

CLICK HERE TO GIVE