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MERF News

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Middle East Reformed Fellowship—“Declaring the Whole Counsel of God”

Arabic Media Ministry

By George Feghaly, Senior Media Ministry staff



For about 40 years, MERF has been reaching the countries of the Middle East and North Africa with Arabic gospel programmes. This started by radio broadcasts but gradually expanded to become more and more internet-based. These countries are largely Muslim. Arabic is by far the most widely-spoken language in the region. It is also the language of Islam. MERF uses a creative and innovative approach to disseminate Christ's teachings among the predominately Muslim Arabic-speaking populations.

Engaging Programmes

A dedicated team of staff and volunteers work to produce high-quality programming that is both engaging

and informative. These are produced to reach different age groups and interests, covering contemporary and historical subjects. There are cultural programmes, religious discussions, talk shows, sports, education, drama, and more. The goal is to use different topics to awaken in the Muslim majority to a deeper understanding of the effects of sin in the world and all aspects of human life. The bad news rouses spiritual longing for the Saviour and his marvelous life, teachings and redemptive work.

Demographically, the population of the Middle East and North Africa is very young. The largest proportion of followers are under 35 years of age. Also, many listeners and internet users in the region are working-class people and are

less educated than some other regions of the world. However, not only young people hear the Arabic gospel messages, many older adults also follow the programmes.

Electronic Revolution

At the beginning, the follow-up team received radio listener letters by post and likewise replied by post. This was a very slow, time-consuming and insecure process. It took weeks and months. Gradually, electronic communication took over. This provided both privacy and instant feedback, so interactions mushroomed. The revolution began by giving listeners a number for SMS text messaging by mobile cell phone. The next big

step was shifting the Arabic gospel radio ministry to internet platforms popular, first with young adults and now with all ages. This dramatically multiplied followers and communications with them.

Still, in addition to online radio, daily short Arabic gospel programmes over medium and shortwave radio continue. In rural areas, with limited television and internet access, radio is still the primary source of news and entertainment. In urban areas internet is widely available. Now we have built three very different online platforms. Each connects with a different segment of the Arabic-speaking population. **Dardasha7.com** (Chat7) tactfully introduces the gospel to Arab youth. **Issa-alMasih.com** (Jesus

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“The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.”
John 6:63b

the Christ) serves inquirers of Muslim background. **MERF-arabiclibrary.com** builds the faith of Arab Christians and Muslim convert spiritual leaders of cell groups. All provide gospel resources 24 /7. Various websites, social platforms and mobile applications are also used. Each features a variety of resources, as well as recordings of radio programmes, there are articles on social and religious topics, quotes, polls, Christian books and other useful content and links.

Follow-up

Digital platforms, with an almost instant response time, have brought much closer communication with our many listeners and followers in the region as well as Arab immigrants,

students and workers in other parts of the world. Some chat with the team for hours or over many months, asking questions from the Bible and about Christ.

Many encouraging messages arrive from Muslims. We listen to their concerns and respectively build bridges of friendship. Valuable books from our online library are shared with serious seekers and believers desiring to grow in Christ.

In most Arabic-speaking countries, churches are very few or non-existent. So, MERF's Arabic media ministry plays an important role in reaching out to these communities with Christ's teachings and his wonderful gift of salvation. The availability of the

Arabic Bible online is the first step for many. It helps worshipping groups which are yet to become organized as churches.

M.H. of Algeria, after listening for several months and downloading the New Testament says: “Now I understand why Christians believe He came from heaven... It is not enough to say that he was a perfect prophet...”

Please Pray

We greatly appreciate your prayers for this ministry as we seek to creatively

produce faithful content, reaching out to new audiences in the many Arabic-speaking communities. For most, this is their only opportunity to know the gospel truth. *Please pray for:*

- Our content to reach the people who need to hear it most, and that hearts and minds would be opened to the message.
- Resources and support to continue producing high-quality media content that connects with Arabic-speaking audiences.
- Our team to be protected and guided, as we work to share the love and hope of Christ.



George Feghaly family