

# PRAYER & PRAISE

*Quarterly news from Middle East Media*

ISSUE 101 JULY 2018

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**GOT IT! AT THE WORLD CUP** - Life transformation in Russia  
**L.I.T.D. IN IRAQ** - Bringing hope to traumatised children

**"Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."**

GALATIANS 6:9

Dear friends,

Welcome to Prayer & Praise 101! This year, 2018, seems to be flying by due to how busy it has been with MEM's work, and projects, across the Middle East.

**This edition of Prayer & Praise demonstrates the diversity of the work that we do across North Africa and the Gulf, as we talk about how religious freedoms are being championed at the World Cup in Russia, while also reporting on a recent trip to Iraq where we trained leaders working with traumatised children.**

It is incredible to see God's hope, justice, and love, being spread across the Middle East through these projects, and many more that are ongoing.

In fact, there are so many great projects ongoing that we couldn't fit stories about them all in this issue. Some of the highlights are that we have trained 48 young people in media and leadership, in March, we launched a film on human trafficking based on three true stories, which attracted NGOs and politicians, and one of the films we created from our WebTV project won 4 awards at a prestigious national film festival in North Africa.

I was recently inspired after speaking with our North Africa director, Renee. She told me that in North Africa, Christians are often identified by their acts of kindness and the good that they do in the community. It should be a challenge for us all to ask - 'Are we identified as Christians by the good that we do?' As the Bible teaches us, *let us not become weary in doing good*, as doing good is pivotal in showing God's love to people across the world.

**One of the many highlights for me in this edition is the opportunity we had to bring one of our projects to Iraq.** It was challenging to read about how the intense trauma that people were facing in Iraq meant that they felt that inner healing was a luxury, in a place where death and war are commonplace.


It is incomprehensible for someone in the West to understand what it would be like to cope with severe trauma to such a degree. However, it is a sign to us that we need to support churches and individuals in Iraq in any way that we can through some of our other workshops that we have available. We are hoping, and intending, to be able to do more in Iraq in the future.

It is reports like these that continue to reinforce the importance of our work across the Gulf and North Africa. Thank you for your continued financial support and prayer, none of this would be possible without supporters like you.

In Him,



*James Baldock*  
Communications Manager  
[comms@mem.org](mailto:comms@mem.org)

A woman wearing a black hijab and a black abaya is standing on a balcony, looking out through a large stone archway. She is holding a camera up to her eye, taking a photograph of the city skyline in the distance. The city features numerous tall, modern skyscrapers with glass facades, situated along a waterfront. The water is a deep blue, and the sky is a clear, light blue. The archway is made of dark, textured stone blocks. The overall scene is captured in bright, natural light, suggesting a sunny day.

**"It is not that the Muslim has seen  
Jesus and rejected Him; he has  
never seen Him. Middle East Media is  
responding to this challenge. Using  
culturally appropriate media it is  
reaching out to those who are  
otherwise unreachable."**

- John Stott

# Got IT! at the World Cup

Life transformation in Russia



**"The LORD delights in those who fear Him, who put their hope in His unfailing love."**

- Psalm 147:11

The World Cup in Russia was a time of passionate support, political intrigue, and celebration of one of the biggest sports across the globe. It was also an opportunity to reach people from Middle Eastern countries with the message of hope, love and reconciliation.

A team of 40 individuals, who are not directly associated with MEM, took 10,000 Bibles, 5,000 Jesus Film DVD's, and 3,000 USB drives filled with resources to help new believers from the Middle East.

**"The vision was to reach the difficult to reach, those who live in countries where it is very dangerous to speak about Christianity. For the first time in history, 5 Islamic countries qualified for the football World Cup. It was an incredible opportunity to reach so many from several Islamic countries."**

- Itamar\*, Outreach Organiser.

MEM were able to support this endeavour by providing episodes of our Got IT! project, which were uploaded onto the USB drives, along with other Christian resources, to provide answers to questions these football fans might have when they return to their respective countries.

Many Muslims are brought up to believe false ideas about Christianity. It is also hard to explain a new worldview to people who have been influenced their entire life by an Islamic worldview, therefore these short animations go a long way to answering some of the common questions that arise.

Some of the topics include; **Jesus** - why would God have a son? **The Trinity** - Do Christians believe in 3 Gods? **Sin** - How can all sins count the same? And **Salvation** - Is it really as simple as believing in Jesus?

Although some of these topics may seem simple to those of us in the West, they are highly controversial in the Arabic-speaking world, and for those who are discovering the Christian faith, it is vital that they have answers.

*(continued on page 6.)*

## What is Got IT!?

This radical project clarifies misconceptions about Christianity and Christians in a region where they are a persecuted minority and where there is a steady flow of negative propaganda distributed about them. Through dynamic, 1-2 minute animations, Got IT! takes common misconceptions that many Muslims have about Christians and Christian theology, and explains simply and clearly what Christians actually believe. It has proven to be a valuable resource to us and many other organisations across the region and beyond. So far we have created 48 episodes and dubbed them in 4 Arabic dialects, you can visit our website ([mem.org](http://mem.org)) and watch one of these episodes for yourself!



(cont.)

This is a great example of how media has longevity, and can be used in different circumstances for years after its initial creation date. The organisers of this outreach are hoping that thousands of our Got IT! videos will be taken back, with World Cup supporters, to their countries. They estimate that over 3,000 people will watch these videos from the USB drives that are being given out - an incredible amount of people who can have their questions about Christianity answered.

**"Our team of 40 people met up prior to the World Cup and then we broke into teams to cover the 5 major cities. We had strong connections with local churches, that we worked with throughout the outreach. We did run into challenges, specifically with Russia's new laws banning Christians talking about the Gospel with non-believers outside of church buildings, however it didn't stop us and we gave out almost all of our resources."**

- Itamar\*, Outreach Organiser.

Please join us in praying for the seeds that have been sown through this outreach. Although the aim of this outreach is to deliver the message of hope that we have in Jesus, there is an important message of religious freedom that is being delivered simultaneously. Many people are brought up with one faith in the Middle East, and they are taught not to question its religious authority.

Through opening dialogue and conversation with people from these Islamic countries, the possibility of religious freedom across the Middle East could start to become a reality. We believe that people don't have to accept the beliefs they've inherited. They should have the freedom to choose their own spiritual destiny.

**Our hope is that these USB drives will be taken back to Middle Eastern countries, help to clarify misconceptions that Muslims have about Christianity, and influence society to allow for greater religious freedom.**

At MEM we believe in having big dreams for the Middle East. Religious freedom, in some countries, seems like an impossible objective for any organisation. However, we serve a God who makes the impossible possible, and we are encouraged by opportunities, such as this outreach at the World Cup in Russia. Please join us in praying that these seeds of transformation will bear much fruit in the weeks, months, and years ahead.

\*Name changed for security reasons.

# PRAYER POINTS

- Thank God that He made a way to reach Muslims at the World Cup in Russia
- Pray for those who have been given the USB's, and other Christian resources, that they will be open to the message of hope, love and reconciliation that we have in Jesus.
- Pray for churches in Russia, as they face these new laws limiting their religious freedoms.

## YOUR PRAYER POINTS

What are you praying and believing for after reading this story? Write your own prayer points below.

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IMAGE: Naruedom Yaempongsa/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

## L.I.T.D. in Iraq

Iraq is a nation that has a recent history of war, turmoil, occupation and insurgency. These recent events have had an effect on all people living in Iraq, including children who have grown up in some of the most terrifying of circumstances.

Children are one of the most vulnerable age groups in the Middle East and they hold, in their hands, the future of the region. Therefore, it is of paramount importance that we work at helping them overcome the trauma they have faced, so that they can discover hope for their lives.

Thankfully, we identified this need and created our project *Life in the Desert* (L.I.T.D.). Although this project is fairly new, we had the opportunity to take its training to Iraq for the first time this year.

We partnered with a local church in Iraq and sent a qualified team to train twenty seven individuals who work directly with children through churches and refugee camps. The training involves empowering these leaders with the knowledge to take groups of children through the animated series and accompanying trauma recovery workshops.



## What is *Life in the Desert*?

*Life in the Desert* is a 3D animated series for children aged 5-12, to help them deal with loss and fear and encourage them through the examples of real Biblical heroes. Many children in the Middle East, particularly those in conflict zones, are dealing with trauma, fear, loss and grief. This series will provide comfort, support and reassurance to children, as well as equipping them to deal with the difficult challenges they face. The series follows the story of a young girl called Farah. After her mother dies, she goes to live with her father and starts to find comfort, hope and transformation through the stories of the Bible.

When our team arrived, they were astonished to find that the church, and participants, had never heard of trauma counselling, or emotional intelligence, before. It was also noted that the participants were far less expressive of their emotions and distinctly less joyful than those trained in Lebanon. Our team believed this was due to the increased trauma that they lived with on a daily basis.

**"At the beginning the participants thought trauma counselling was a luxury, as having to deal with killed family members and bombings were more urgent, however, toward the end of the day they started to realise that inner healing was also vital."**

It became apparent by the end of the training that even some of the participants would benefit from counselling and psychiatric intervention, however, with the extreme circumstances in Iraq, these services are few and far between.

*(continued on page 10.)*



**Farah**  
Lead character in  
*Life in the Desert*.



IMAGE: Serkan Senturk/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

*(cont.)*

One participant stayed behind after the training and sobbed for a long time, she couldn't identify why she felt the way she did. She explained that she had a good life and a good husband, but was overcome with grief from having to live with a war around her. Our team encouraged her to go and see a psychiatrist, however she explained that the nearest one was two cities away and she couldn't go.

There were certainly many needs in Iraq and our team offered to provide further training in the future beyond just L.I.T.D. and possibly even our Blossoms training which uses art and drama therapy to promote psychological, emotional, and social change.

Our team will now explore how we can increase our work in Iraq, support the growth of our L.I.T.D programme in the country, and find more partnerships to have an even greater impact. They have asked if we can continue to pray for this incredible opportunity and doorway into Iraq. Specifically if we can pray for the participants of the recent training, the children they will now be able to help, and healing from the trauma around them.

**We can't do everything, but we must do something. Thank you for your ongoing support and prayer for the work of MEM.**

*Yes!* I want to join with MEM to make a difference in the Middle East...

## Pray

Pray for our work

Pray for the region

Receive the Call2Prayer fortnightly e-mail

## Give & fundraise

Commit to giving regularly

Fundraise by doing a sponsored event

Leave a legacy to MEM

## Advocate

Invite a speaker

Advocate for MEM in your own church

Share about MEM's work in small groups

**Thank you for your commitment to the future of MEM!**

*If you would like further information on how you could be involved with any of the above please e-mail us [comms@mem.org](mailto:comms@mem.org)*

IMAGE: Hemitis/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

## MEM on Social Media

If you would like to learn more about how your support is impacting lives in the Middle East, you can find us on Facebook ([fb.com/middleeastmedia](https://fb.com/middleeastmedia)) or on Instagram ([instagram.com/middleeastmedia](https://instagram.com/middleeastmedia)).

*Sowing seeds of transformation*

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