

Freedom of religion!

We have seen many changes over the past several months in Egypt, the largest country in the Arab world, and, in many ways, its cultural and political center. Here in the US, headlines have focused on violence and conflict. In the midst of all this chaos, one particularly interesting phenomenon has been the unprecedented joining together of Egyptian Christians -- Coptic, Catholic, Presbyterian, Anglican, and independent -- with liberal Muslims and secular Egyptians, in calling for freedom of religion. In one recent meeting to discuss the new Egyptian constitution, Coptic Pope Tawadros II specifically asked government officials to end the special legal privilege given to the "Abrahamic faiths," i.e. Islam, Judaism and Christianity. Tawadros' insistence on the right of every individual to choose his or her own faith, or to have no faith at all, may seem counter-intuitive, at least to some, but it is actually deeply engrained in the Christian ideal. At our best, Christians trust the power of God to draw people to himself, without man-made coercion. All Christians ask -- all we have a right to ask -- is for an even playing field. While staying out of politics, Arab Vision has been involved in this struggle since the very beginning. With your help, we will continue to do so. Please pray for the continued expansion of freedom of religion in Egypt and across the Arab world.

Best wishes in Christ,
For the Board of Arab Vision Inc,
William Lovell



Ben Lovell

Turbulent times in the Arab World

We are in the middle of an Arab World in turmoil. While writing this newsletter, we do not know yet what will happen next in Syria, nor who was responsible for the chemical attack there. The UN Security Council does not hold a unanimous opinion about military intervention in Syria and America may decide to intervene in a limited way soon. Rumours of opposition groups being responsible for the massacre are growing. The 'rebel' groups that fight Bashar al-Assad's regime are certainly not a homogeneous group and they may be fighting each other as much as they fight the sitting government.



There is now a massive exodus of Kurds and Christians, usually ending up in Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Egypt. They don't want to wait until it is their turn to be slaughtered. Under Assad's regime they had a relatively peaceful life, but they fear what will happen if Islamist groups unleash their aggression on them. [pic refugees here]

Lebanon fears the violence that could easily add to the sectarian clashes already happening there and Lebanese Christians feel particularly insecure.

The majority of Egypt's population, including its Christian population of around 10%, supported the military's removal of the Mursi regime. It is questionable how democratic the 2012 elections actually were, and it soon became very clear that the Mursi government was not using its democratic mandate to serve the whole country's interests. He hastily rushed through an Islamist constitution, granted himself undemocratic power, established a Shura Council of mostly Islamists and almost collapsed the economy in just one year.

While the army and Brotherhood supporters violently clashed in Egypt's big cities, Christian homes, business and churches in regional centres were attacked or set on fire.

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Psalms of David in the languages of Morocco

Psalms 1, 8, 23 and another three beautiful psalms, presented in four different languages spoken in Morocco: Moroccan Arabic, Tarafit, Tashelhit and Tassoussit. Six psalms in four languages, filmed in several different areas in Morocco covering thousands of kilometres. This project is in the stage of being edited and we hope to finish the first language sometime in October. It will take some more time to finalize them all to be broadcast. We will keep you up to date about the progress. Please pray for creativity in this last and important stage of the production of these programmes!



"Muslims from the entire neighbourhood rushed to help us, and did their utmost to put out the fire"

Pastor of burnt church in Minya, Egypt

Rural women choose for **media for change**



We recently produced a series of TV programs with Arab women from the rural areas of Egypt. The provinces of Minya and Assiut, the region where last month so many churches and Christian institutions, schools and businesses were attacked or burnt down, are packed with little villages in which women are by far the majority. Many men work in countries in the Gulf. In this region clashes between Muslims and Christians regularly take place, whereas at the same time the sense of solidarity within the communities is of high importance. Most of the people just want to live in peace with their neighbours, regardless of their religious differences. More important problems often are the poverty, bad health conditions, unemployment....

Throughout the years Arab Vision has provided media training to groups of rural women in Upper Egypt; because watching TV is one of the major activities of women in that region, they consider the use of TV programs a most valuable means of discussing their specific problems. Important topics like education for girls, violence against women, arranged (early) marriages, and female circumcision are part of this semi-drama series. These TV programs were produced in the Sa'idi dialect of Upper Egypt and will be used by local NGOs besides being broadcast by TV channels.

“My five friends and I now believe in Jesus and His cross. We will not leave Him forever...you have the truth and the light...”

Saudi Arabia

Growing number of Christians in Algeria

While the eyes of the world are focused on countries in the Middle East such as Syria and Egypt, developments elsewhere in the Arab World are left almost unnoticed. For more than 10 years Arab Vision has been producing evangelistic TV programs for Algeria, many of them in the language of the Kabyle people who live in the mountainous region in the north east of Algeria known as Kabylia. The Kabyle people are often more open to learn about and accept the Christian faith partly because, as a minority, they have never welcomed the Arab majority nor the Arabic language and the accompanying religion, Islam. Reports about the numbers of Christians vary greatly. Some estimates count hundreds of thousands of new believers in the last decade and a minimum of 300 new churches.

Islamic scholars however state that the 'problem of Christianization' is not limited to Kabylia only, but is growing in the rest of the country as well - a problem we would like to reword as a blessing!

The Algerian government prefers to trivialize the growth in the number of Christians, and emphasizes that particularly youth are easily influenced temporarily, enticed by scholarships abroad in exchange for converting to Christianity.

Reports from Algeria also differ about the degree of oppression that Christians in Algeria face, from being relatively free to being structurally disadvantaged. Freedom of worship is limited, Christian parents do not get exemptions for their children from lessons on the Quran and Christians face a lot of opposition in social life.

Since Arab Vision started producing and broadcasting TV programs for Algeria in 2002, tens of thousands of Kabyle people have embraced the Christian faith. Besides proclaiming the gospel through the programs, we have also had the opportunity of producing programs on leadership

and discipleship training. Local Christians have been working in teams to visit and disciple many new believers. We hope to finalize our current production about Jesus' teaching through his parables before the end of this year. This series will be produced in the Kabyle language, and we hope to subtitle these 13 programs covering 26 parables in Algerian Arabic as well so that we can reach the rest of the country and the broader region of North Africa with the powerful message of the gospel.



Sunrise in the Kabyle mountains

Please pray with us for our Christian sisters and brothers in Algeria and also for the final stage of our project. If you want to contribute to the funds we need for subtitling these 13 TV programs in Arabic please send your donation online (see page 3), or contact us at contact@arabvision.org for more donation options.

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Turbulent times in the Arab World

Most international media outlets ignored these terrible events for days until some of the agonizing images of burning churches were eventually shown to the world. Eyewitnesses reported that police and fire brigade often did not intervene, help or protect these Christian communities. However, there were also some encouraging stories about Muslim neighbours protecting the homes and churches of Christians.

Although Egypt and Syria are at the centre of the world's attention, Christians in Tunisia need our prayers as well. The moderate al-Nahda Islamic party which has been governing the country since president Ben Ali was toppled during the revolution in 2011 is under criticism for being unable to control emerging radical Islamist movements. Tunisia, known for its moderate and even tolerant attitude towards (Christian) minorities, is facing Islamization and the Church in that country fears the future.



In the midst of this turmoil we at Arab Vision have been able to continue our work. However, we do face logistic challenges in travelling and issues such as the presenters of programs suddenly disappearing or emigrating. Further, some people are becoming more reluctant to appear on TV.

We are grateful to be able to continue our ministry and we are encouraged by the many Christians and Christian leaders of the Church in the Arab World who see these difficult times as an opportunity for the Church to be visible and to be light and salt. Please pray for them and also for us and our work.

Urgent!

Kurdish Sorani-speaking Christians needed for follow-up ministry

Some time ago we produced an impressive series of 33 TV programs for Kurds, in the Sorani language. Burning questions for Muslims concerning Christian themes such as the Trinity, how God could become man through Jesus Christ, the reality of the cross and the resurrection and other topics.

We are ready to broadcast these programs but we need to get in contact with the right people who can answer questions from viewers once they go to air, helping them with their needs and referring them to Christian communities. Through the use of the internet and more affordable global means of communication, we can use the help of Kurdish Christians anywhere in the world. If you know Kurdish Christians or churches who would be interested and committed to help, please contact us at contact@arabvision.org.

Please visit our website www.arabvision.org to check out how to make your donation online.



Your Help Needed

EDITING OF 39 TV PROGRAMS FOR PERSONAL BIBLE-STUDY - £ 2500 NEEDED

Two highly respected Arabic Bible teachers explain and discuss the epistles of Paul in their historical, cultural and theological context. Their approach is a method of Bible teaching relatively unknown in the Arab churches: it invites people to dig into the Scriptures much deeper than they are used to and to think for themselves. Arab Christians usually just accept what the priest or pastor tells

them without personally studying the Bible. These programs give ordinary Bible readers the tools to study the Scriptures for themselves, along with helping them to grow spiritually into mature believers. We also believe this will help encourage and develop the Christian leaders of the future.

Please help us to finalize editing these programs so that they can be broadcast soon!

URGENT! CAMERA - £ 2750 NEEDED

We urgently need a new camera to allow us to film more programs simultaneously and to film more camera angles for other programmes. We currently often need to hire one for these purposes so owning one will save us on production costs and reduce scheduling headaches.

Can you help?

URGENT 2! DATA STORAGE EQUIPMENT- £ 2000 NEEDED

As we work towards embracing social and other forms of new media we need digitize, index and store our film stock. We also do not have the capacity to securely and conveniently store the many new programs currently in production. Our programs or sections of them are often rebroadcasted or re-edited for other purposes. We urgently need to increase our digital storage capacity on networked hard disk drives and your contribution to this would be greatly appreciated!

In the Spotlights: Samia



Samia has been Arab Vision's International Finance Director for just over one year, having worked in other finance roles with us since 2008. Her husband and their 3-year-old son were born, raised and live in the Arab World, and she says they all "love talking about Jesus". While qualifying as an accountant her dream became to use her skills to help bring the gospel to the people of her own region as part of an international team. Encouraged by her father, this dream motivated and sustained her through her studies and during the following four years as she gained experience in an accountancy firm. As she walks the busy streets of her neighbourhood, she often prays, "Please God, show Your light to these people; they need You now more than ever". Her extended family have a weekly prayer meeting to pray for the Arab World. "Our challenging situation and our vision for the future drives us to prayer. We keep on praying, and we have peace that God is in control now as He has always been. I see Him at work everywhere, and I am confident that He will complete everything He sets out to do here. My vision is to witness and participate in this work". Samia's husband is also an accountant and their young son has cerebral palsy and is such a blessing to their family. Her church community regularly prays for and supports the work of Arab Vision. Please pray for Samia and her family and for all of our local staff. Many face challenging circumstances yet express their belief that they live and serve at a pivotal time for their region.

>>> *the young lady in the picture is not Samia*

Would you like to receive regular prayer requests about the Arab world and the work of Arab Vision, please subscribe to our email prayer letter through our website www.arabvision.org or write to us at ian@arabvision.org

CONTACT & FINANCE INFO

Arab Vision Trust Fund is registered as a charity in Cyprus
email: contact@arabvision.org
website: www.arabvision.org

In the United Kingdom, you can send your gift direct to our bank:
Bank: Lloyds TSB Bank Plc
Account: Arab Vision
Sort code: 30-97-24
Account no: 49415760

Alternatively, cheques can be sent to:
The Treasurer
Arab Vision
23 Mill Lane
Saffron Walden
Essex CB10 2AS

In the USA, checks can be sent directly to our American office. Arab Vision Inc. is a 501(c)3 organization.

P.O. Box 110354
Dallas TX 75011

You may also **donate by paying through our website** www.arabvision.org. This is a secure payment facility.

In Canada, Australia and New Zealand, cheques can be sent to Interserve with a cover letter indicating that the money is meant for Arab Vision.

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ST. FRANCIS MAGAZINE

www.stfrancismagazine.info

St Francis Magazine is a publication of Arab Vision and Interserve. Both organizations are committed to witnessing to Jesus Christ in the Arab World.

St Francis Magazine aims to strengthen Christian witness in the Arab World. The magazine does this by the articles we publish here, through study programmes, and by offering applied training on matters related to the Christian discipleship in the region.

Missiology can be much debated, and a key purpose of St Francis Magazine is to stimulate discussion and debate. However, we do have some solid parameters. Central for us is our commitment to the triune God as revealed in the Christian Scriptures and ultimately in his Son Jesus Christ. We adhere to the historic faith as expressed by the Ecumenical Councils of the early Church.

The church in the Arab World has often been ignored or sidelined by Western Christianity. We want to help encourage Arab Christians to take their place in the Christian world, and to bring together East and West to see God glorified in His global Church.

Job Opening: Communications Director

Are you interested in helping us inspire the rest of the world with what God is doing in the Middle East and North Africa through media? We urgently need a communications director to join our international team to write stories about our work for our newsletters and prayer letters along with maintaining the content of our websites and creatively communicating with our supporters. You'll need to be fluent in English, have good writing and communication skills and, of course, a heart for the Arab people. It would be best if you could be based in the Arab world, or be willing to regularly travel there. We don't pay salaries to non-Arab staff though a small volunteers' stipend is available and our international team are usually seconded from mission agencies such as Interserve, CMS, MECO or Arab World Ministries. For more information please contact our Personnel Director at Peter@arabvision.org.

**ARAB
VISION**

Arab Christians proclaiming the Gospel on TV in the Arab World