

PHENOMENAL RESPONSE TO NEW GULF SOCIAL MEDIA OUTREACH

PAGE 6





From the editor

Dear Friends,

I pray that you are well as you receive and read your latest MEMO. All of our teams have had a busy first half of 2023, but we're excited by the opportunities that God has put before us and to hear of lives being transformed. One of our biggest encouragements is you, our supporters, as we all walk together in seeing God work across the Middle East.

Our Gulf women's team have begun connecting with people through social media and I was encouraged to read the article on page 6. Their content is reaching almost a million social media accounts, and they've received over 10,000 direct messages from individuals reaching out. Please join me in praying for them and this inspiring ministry.

The excitement doesn't stop there though! We also have a report on this year's MEM Week, an interview with one of our long-term supporters, Anthea Allan, plus an introduction to another of our Trustees, Jen Hooker. I hope that all of the content included in this issue is a blessing to you.

May God be with you over the coming months.

James Baldock

Senior Communications Manager
comms@mem.org



QUICK NEWS

Brief ministry updates and points for your prayers.



LIBYAN BIBLE

Praise God for the faith and diligence of the two Libyan believers we are walking alongside as they translate and audio record the New Testament into their own dialect. The project is progressing well, with hopes of completing the whole Bible by the end of 2024.

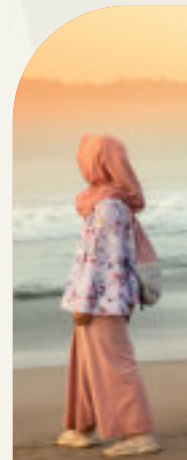
CHANGEMAKER

An overt social media page sharing the Gospel with North African and Iraqi young adults, aged 18-35, has restarted positively. After a few years of refocusing, the ChangeMaker platform has been relaunched with a new content strategy.



BASMA'S HEALTH

Many of you have been praying for Basma, one of our faithful long-term believers from the majority background, who trained with us and is now one of the leaders of the women's Gulf outreach (see pg. 6). Basma has been undergoing intensive chemotherapy for a malignant stomach cancer in recent months. This is being funded by the government, which is unheard of! We thank God for His provision. Amazingly, Basma continues to actively serve the women of the Gulf through this new social media ministry with hope and positivity. Please keep praying for her healing, and praise God for her faith!





Throwback to MEM WEEK 2023

We were delighted to spend time with many of you, virtually and in person, in May during our third annual MEM Week. This year's theme was **FILM REAL** – and what a privilege it was to showcase a selection of the real media that God is using to transform lives across the Middle East.

Locally-led, high-quality and culturally-relevant: it's these qualities which make our media ministry effective, powerful and engaging. We are so glad that we were able to demonstrate this through our public and exclusive events across the week. Here are just a few snaps from our in-person event in London – with huge thanks to our church partner, St Paul's Kingston, for hosting us!

“Praise the Lord that the technology worked and we were able to know more about the work of MEM.”



“Thank you for inviting us, that was a really interesting time.”



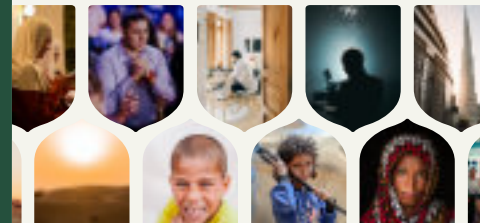
“Such an interesting and challenging hour.”

“Fantastic insight into your unique work.”

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Reaching the Gulf

LOCAL WOMEN'S TEAM HARNESS SOCIAL MEDIA FOR THE GOSPEL

Despite the relative wealth and global connectedness of this part of the Middle East, women in the Gulf region live in very isolated and restrictive communities. Long-held societal norms and gendered expectations mean that the chances of them hearing the truth about Jesus on the ground are next-to-none. But this is where their technological advancement is providing unparalleled ministry opportunities. **The Gulf spends a lot of time social media.** In fact, in January 2023, research by DataReportal found that **the top 3 countries in the world for social media use were the UAE, Qatar and Bahrain – all of which are located in the Arabian Gulf.**

If you've been reading MEMO for a while, you may already know that we have been working with a team of women, all believers from the majority background in the Gulf, who are passionate about reaching other women like them using social media. After two years of our holistic training, the digital space launched on Instagram and Facebook in **December 2022**, and the response they have received has been astounding. They expected to reach 800,000 accounts and see two professions of faith in year one.

But in just 4 months, they reached **938,000** accounts, received over **10,000 direct messages**, and saw **three professions of faith** – from both women and men! The people of the Gulf are clearly desperate to know the truth about Jesus.

These communities are often fed lies and targeted by campaigns that propagate misconceptions about Christianity. The women running this project and producing the social content know exactly the kinds of pressures that women from their background encounter on a daily basis, and the barriers that prevent them from truly exploring the Christian message. The content on this platform displays biblical hope, freedom, and truth in accessible ways, and addresses some of these specific cultural and core issues.

This summer, they created a series of videos specifically around the idea of 'sacrifice', to coincide with **Eid-al-Adha**, the 'Feast of Sacrifice', which remembers and reenacts the sacrifice of Ibrahim (Abraham). This is an incredibly important observation in the Islamic calendar – also forming an integral part of the annual **Hajj** pilgrimage to Mecca. Eid-al-Adha, lasting three days, fell in June this year, and is taken as a public holiday by people of all faiths across much of the MENA region.

Given the very apparent need in this part of the region, we are now raising funds to enable these women to **expand their capacity**, so that we can train new team members, provide essential follow-up to those reaching out, and continue to create novel content that attracts, engages, and transforms lives. **Please keep these women, and those they are reaching, in your prayers.**



Pray for this project



PRAYER

AUGUST

Pray for **the team leading the outreach** and their workload.

Pray for the Lord's wisdom, blessing upon their skills and creativity.

Particularly pray for **Basma** (see page 3) and for new women to come on board to help with the project.

SEPTEMBER

Pray for **those who have decided to follow Jesus** already as a result of this ministry.

May their hearts be fertile ground for spiritual growth.

May the pressures facing new believers in this region not deter them.

OCTOBER

Pray for **those who have been and will be reached** by this ministry.

May many more realise the truth about the living God and put their trust in Him.

May they grow into mature believers who long to share Jesus with others!

FOR MORE PRAYER NEEDS VISIT MEM.ORG/PRAY



Media Ministry

WHAT MAKES US DISTINCTIVE?

MEM began almost 50 years ago, printing and distributing biblically-motivated magazines across secular newsstands in a dozen Arab states. As times have evolved, we have continued to reach the region **using the latest technologies** – radio, video, the internet, animation, and social media. But with digital and video technology more accessible than ever before, almost anyone can set up a Facebook page, record a video, or start a YouTube channel. Our highly experienced teams have decades worth of media ministry experience in the region, but what **really** makes MEM's work so distinctive?

Our specialist teams are a powerhouse of creativity, faith, and technical aptitude, always ready to respond to the Lord's call. From skilled animators and videographers, to talented editors, producers, storytellers and scriptwriters; each individual brings their gifts to the table. **We're the only Christian animation team in the Arab World, with**

13 in-house professional animators working for us. Further, we are the only organisation focusing on holistic media training: imparting not only our media expertise, but walking alongside new Christian content creators in the region, helping them to fully establish their own effective and sustainable media ministries for their communities.

We're also always looking ahead, annexing the newest innovations to maximise our reach. **We're currently the only Christian team in the Middle East using a near realistic virtual character in our work.** Because of our long-held credibility and regional connections, **this character is acting as a digital influencer** to bring more of Christ to the Arab world.

Production and training is only one side of our work; stay tuned for your next MEMO for more on what makes our work happening on the ground stand out!

The Power of Regular Giving



BY ANTHEA ALLEN

I've been an MEM supporter since I was a student almost 30 years ago.

I don't know about you, but I am amazing at good intentions. Actually getting around to do them...less so. Picking my way through half-finished projects in the garage to emptying the washing machine can be a challenge! But what has this got to do with being an MEM supporter? Simple: a direct debit!

Uncertainty is an unavoidable aspect of life in the Middle East. In a small way, I can help reduce the stress of that by making my donations regular month in, month out. I review the amount if my circumstances change, but it means that supporting MEM is never found lurking half way down my black hole of a to-do list.

Why have I supported MEM for more than half my life?

I became a Christian at University. Being young, free and single, what better could I do than become a missionary? And who are the people least likely to happen across the Gospel? Middle Eastern women! Fortunately, an older, wiser Christian raised a brow and asked whether I was doing it for their sake or for mine. My influence as young, Western woman with a year of Arabic evening classes would be tiny. Then, I came across MEM at a conference.

It was far better for me to work in the UK and regularly support MEM with cash and prayer. That way, people who speak the language fluently and understand the culture can provide a Christian influence directly into the homes of those who are unlikely to encounter Jesus any other way. **My dream of changing lives in hard to reach places could come about!**

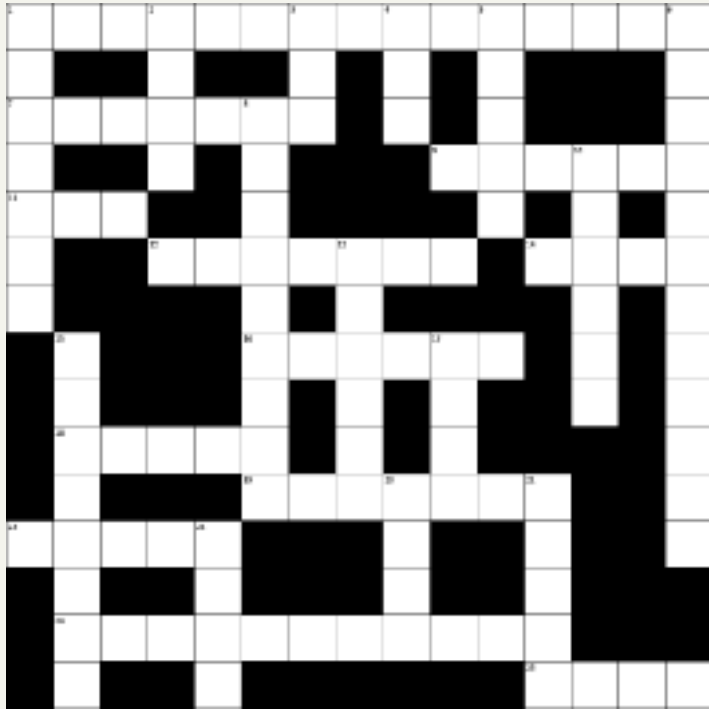
Whether you can support MEM with £1 a month or £100, I urge you to set up a Standing Order. Make that good intention a reality. **I have no regrets about supporting MEM regularly for 30 years and, God willing, I shall continue to do so for another 30!**

JOIN OUR MISSION TODAY



It's easy to set up a regular donation online!
MEM.ORG/GIVE





ACROSS

1. Our 3D animation series serving traumatised children (4,2,3,6)
7. Gulf nation, an island, one of the top three social media consumers (7)
9. Man in the temple in Luke 2, also name of one of Joseph's Old Testament brothers (6)
11. Not old (3)
12. Popular entertainment streaming service (7)
14. Region targeted by the women's social media outreach (4)
16. Male or female (6)
18. Pilgrimage destination for Muslims in Saudi Arabia (5)
19. Type of luxury date (stone fruit) from the Middle East (7)
22. Bashar al-____, Syrian president (5)
24. See 6 Down
25. Former name of Apostle Paul (4)

DOWN

1. Nation where MEM began, capital Beirut (7)
2. "Whoever has ____ (4) to hear, let them hear.", Jesus' words in the Parable of the Sower
3. Number of commandments given to Moses (3)
4. Festival at the end of Ramadan (3)
5. Digital communication tool (5)
6. **21. Down AND 24. Across:** ____ (12) ____ (5) with ____ (11) hope, MEM's tagline
8. Social media platform, mainly used for picture and video sharing (9)
10. Prepare, support (5)
13. Connected (6)
15. Biblical city, today in Syria (8)
17. Reflection of sound (4)
20. Capital of South Sudan (4)
21. See 6 Down
23. Information, usually digital (4)

ANSWERS REVEALED IN THE NEXT ISSUE!

INTRODUCING...

Jen Hooker



TEAM

Our Trustee, Jen, was invited to join the UK board in March 2022 after many years of faithful fundraising and advocacy for our work. Jen grew up in Suffolk but is currently living in Amman, Jordan, and working for Medair.



I ALWAYS WANTED TO BE...

a paramedic, along with my cousin. She became one, but I went down a different path!

I FIRST BECAME INTERESTED IN THE MIDDLE EAST...

when I joined St Mark's Church in London and learnt about their partners working in the region, including MEM and Medair.

THIS YEAR I AM LOOKING FORWARD TO...

building deeper friendships with local and international people in Jordan, and exploring the parts of the country I have not seen yet.

WHAT'S THE STRANGEST EXPERIENCE YOU'VE HAD SO FAR LIVING IN JORDAN?

Probably some exploding kombucha, which went all over the kitchen ceiling!

FAVOURITE DISH FROM THE REGION?

When I'm really hungry, it's Maqluba, an

'upside down' dish of chicken, rice and vegetables.

I SUPPORT MEM BECAUSE...

they are good at what they do, and want to reach people in a genuine and authentic way.

YOUR FAVOURITE PIECE OF TECHNOLOGY?

Camera! I studied photography at university and love being able to escape in nature to photograph what's around me.

SOCIAL MEDIA – ARE YOU A FRIEND OR FOE?

Friend, I probably spend too much time on Instagram! But it encourages me to learn more and is a great way to connect with my Jordanian colleagues outside of the office.

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