

# MEMO

middle east  
**media**

Autumn **2021**



*In this  
issue:*

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recent Blossoms  
appeal

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burgeoning in  
North Africa

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Dear Friends,

Welcome to our latest Autumn edition of MEMO! We have had a busy few months with our field teams focusing on seeing God transform lives across the region. Here in the West, we had the inaugural MEM week, which saw a week full of events celebrating the past and future of our ministry, as well as fundraising, fun, and most importantly – prayer.

In this edition, you'll find updates on our Blossoms and Media Team Planting ministries, as well as on the exciting new work in the Gulf that uses Facebook to reach out to women in the region. It's always amazing to see technology being used as a tool to reach and minister to the hearts of people who need Jesus' love – I hope you'll join me in praying for all of these endeavours.

Thank you for joining with us on this journey. If you'd like to catch up on any of the recordings from MEM week, then please don't hesitate to get in touch with me.



James Baldock

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## Join us for Zoom Prayer - Our 46th Anniversary

We can't quite believe that our 45th anniversary celebration was almost a whole year ago. On **2nd September**, to mark 46 years of MEM, we will be holding two online prayer meetings, at **2:00pm and 8:00pm (UK Time)**. Both will be hosted by our long-term supporter **Dr. Hugh Osgood, President of Churches Together in England**. Zoom details will be released on our website closer to the occasion.

Front cover photo: KrakenImages/Shutterstock.com

# MEM Week 2021 - THANK YOU!

MEM Week  
2021 | 2

It was wonderful to see and interact with so many of you at our various events as part of our first ever MEM Week in June. We are incredibly thankful for all of your support, encouragement and engagement that made the occasion a success. With so many different things taking place, it's hard to pick just a few highlights...but here are some of our **favourite moments** from the week!



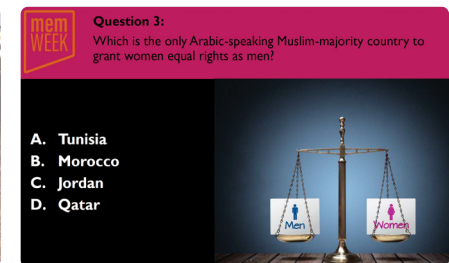
Sung worship in both Arabic and English at our Saturday Gathering



Rachel spending 26 hours dressed as a duck for Move for Change!



Jess' Move for Change broccoli cake, baked as one of her 26 sponsored challenges!



Learning and having fun whilst raising money for our women's work at our Wednesday Quiz Night

# Update on Blossoms

*fearfully and wonderfully made...*

*"I praise you, for I am*



## PSALM 139:14

Many of you responded financially and in prayer to our urgent appeal back in March for our Blossoms workshops in North Africa. These workshops, helping women explore emotional expression and find psychological healing from trauma, had to come to a stop earlier this year due to a lack of funding. We did not even have the funds to continue supporting women online.

We set a fundraising target of £5,500, which would have enabled Blossoms to restart for another round of workshops. It is with thanks to God's faithfulness and your generosity, that we raised an incredible **£9,500** towards this appeal, giving our North Africa team the funding for multiple rounds of workshops throughout 2021! Ramadan and Covid-19 restrictions, however, caused some delay in being able to plan for its recommencement.

Yet, we praise God that Blossoms was able to restart at the **end of June**, offering twice-weekly sessions **in person** for three weeks for both Sudanese refugee and local women.

Initially just ten signed up, but wonderfully **25 women** participated. The sessions have been giving them the opportunity to discover and express themselves emotionally through **drama therapy**. This is what some of the women shared about the experience:

*"This was the first time I'd had the chance to see myself as a human being and to think about my own needs." - Nura\**

*"I discovered the inner child in me today." - Rayhana\**

Our team also reported back on how incredible it was to see the Sudanese and local women bonding together. **Sudanese refugees are the most neglected migrant group in North Africa**, by locals, government and even NGOs in the region. Many of them live unregistered, unable to access aid. Women are particularly vulnerable. Many have already experienced extreme trauma, and are then confronted with extreme racial abuse and social exclusion in a new country. Yet from just the first of these workshops, those participating said that they already felt more **integrated and loved**. God is already at work!

## Please pray for...

1. **For God to be continuing to work in the lives of each of these 25 precious women.** May they continue to find hope and heal.
2. **For our team** running the workshops and planning the next sessions; may they have strength, sensitivity and wisdom.
3. **COVID-19 restrictions** to allow meetings to continue in person, and enable the team to safely plan ahead for more rounds of sessions.
4. **For those in need** of these workshops that haven't yet had the opportunity.

# NEW: Facebook Platform for Women in the Gulf



Women in the Arabian Gulf live in very closed communities, where opportunities for evangelism are extremely limited. In keeping with strict interpretations of Islamic law, Gulf women are often considered **second class citizens**, with few rights. The male guardianship system exists in all Gulf countries to varying degrees. For the majority of women there, there is very little **freedom to exercise choice** in matters of daily living, let alone religious freedom.

But **the Holy Spirit isn't limited** by these human efforts. Over the years, MEM has journeyed with many women and men from a Muslim background who are now faithfully walking with Jesus despite the unbearable oppression that this entails. Such Christian women have shared a deep desire to have a safe place to meet together, where they can grow in their faith and **reach out to their non-believing sisters**. They agreed that an online platform is the safest, and most effective, way of achieving this. **In December 2020**, we therefore embarked on a new **3-year** social media project to help realise this vision.

**“We are therefore Christ’s  
ambassadors...”  
2 CORINTHIANS 5:20**

**Working alongside** three believers from a Muslim background, and three from a Christian background, MEM’s vision is to develop a social media presence that will address the many issues that women in the Gulf encounter on a daily basis.



Often Muslims are taught to accept everything without questioning. We hope to use this new platform to **cultivate a questioning culture among Muslim women**, provide answers to seekers, and establish **follow-up communities** for those who take a step of faith. We hope to reach **600,000 women** through the platform over the next **12 months**.

A local project leader has been appointed to coach the six believing women spiritually and emotionally, and train them in social media management, specifically using **Facebook**. These individuals are being equipped with the skills they need to be the developers and administrators of this new Facebook page, and to conduct all follow-up interactions. By God’s grace, this training will also enable these sisters to become **leaders in a future new media team serving the Gulf, and in the emergent New Church** in the region.



We have partnered with larger organisations for some initial funding, and production of the first visual content. But more funding is required before the Facebook page can be made active, as this demands the regular production of high quality materials. **For your prayers, please remember these women, and our funding needs.**

# New Media Teams: Update

We've shared much over the past year about our vision to work with individuals and communities more widely across the MENA region. The goal, to establish and equip new media teams made up of local believers who are then able to **reach their own people**. Experience has shown us that media created by those from within its target audience has a far greater impact than that created by outsiders - and this is particularly true for New Church believers.

Over the past year, we've also been raising funds for the outworkings of this vision, and many of you gave generously at **Christmas** to support our work with **Libyan believers**. Six months on, we are delighted to share some project updates from this work in North Africa.



Our team recently completed recording the **Gospel of Mark** into one of the dialects widely spoken in Libya. God gave the vision of this to two mature Libyan believers, living in a neighbouring Arab country where our team is based. As far as they know, this is the first time that the Scriptures have been recorded in their own dialect. One shared the impact that recording the Scriptures in his own language had on him:

*"My life is changed, my love for the Scriptures has grown, and the reality of its impact on my life is just too much."*

Our Director of New Media Teams shared that it has been a blessing to walk with them over the last 6 months as they find their way into the **use of media for outreach** to their people. However, there have been trials, particularly surrounding **security and safety**. Both individuals have also sadly had multiple experiences with individual Christians and organisations taking advantage, not honoring agreements, and failing to protect them.



*He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation."*

**MARK 16:15**

Please keep this new team in **your prayers** in the coming months as they test their first pilot content, and plan recording the Gospel of John.

Our team has also begun to work with a **leading evangelical church** in **another North African country**, with the view to eventually developing another new team there. An entire floor of their church building has been dedicated to media facilities. Our team will begin by working with them to design the best use of this space, and to **identify equipment needs**. They will also be providing some initial **intensive leadership training**. We are incredibly excited and encouraged by this partnership and the enthusiasm of these local believers. Do join us in praying for this new team's **practical and spiritual development**.

## Focus on Prayer: His Voice above the Noise

We are living in a rapidly advancing digital age. There has never before been a time with such a vast supply of media content at our fingertips.

People under the age of 30 make up over half of the population of Muslim-majority countries, many of which lie in the Middle East and North Africa region (MENA). Young people, finding themselves **dissatisfied** with Islam, can access a whole new world through digital technologies. Those from Christian and non-religious backgrounds, too, are exposed to a **clamour of different voices and ideologies** every time they browse online, or switch on the TV. Most of these voices glorify a way of life that does not point them towards God. We see this in the West, but with some parts of the Arabian Gulf now having **higher rates of internet penetration** than parts of the USA\*, this is a growing problem in the MENA.

Young people are particularly searching for answers amidst the growing noise. The answer isn't to try and stop them from searching, but to pray that the all-powerful, majestic, truth-giving **voice of the Lord will be heard above them all.**

### Prayer Points

1. Give thanks for the **power** media has to **reach and influence**, and pray for the Christian presence within the sphere to strengthen.
2. Pray for young people to be encountering and discovering **media that points them to the living God.**
3. Pray for more opportunities for our productions to be broadcast on secular platforms. Pray also for our **North Africa team** conceptualising a **new TV series for children**, presenting a Christian perspective on complex issues, such as money and relationships.

\*Source: Arab Barometer

*The voice  
of the Lord  
is powerful;*

*the voice of  
the Lord is  
majestic.*

**PSALM 29:4**

# Give

Visit  
[mem.org/give](http://mem.org/give)

# Pray

Visit our prayer &  
news blog  
[mem.org/pray](http://mem.org/pray)

# Advocate

Visit our  
advocacy page  
[mem.org/advocacy](http://mem.org/advocacy)

# Thank You

Your giving, prayers, and advocacy for MEM are what make it possible for us to do our vital work across the Middle East and North Africa.

*Sowing seeds of transformation*

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