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..... Horizons International Newsletter – August 2022

BEAUTY FOR ASHES

SUPPORTING NATIONAL CHURCHES TO SERVE THEIR COMMUNITIES IN LEBANON AND UKRAINE



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IN THIS ISSUE:

THE UKRAINE CRISIS
FUND HELPS CHURCHES
SERVE A NATION AT WAR

A TIME OF LEARNING
AND LEADING AT
LEGACY CONFERENCE

UPDATE ON
TROUBLING BIBLE
TRANSLATIONS


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KHALIL AND JULIA ABDELAHAD CALLED TO SERVE TOGETHER

As we have served together as husband and wife in ministry, the Lord has shown his faithfulness to us in so many ways—even that we both found Christ, and then found each other! We have both served with Horizons in Lebanon since 2017, with Khalil developing relationships among Lebanese churches, and Julia focusing on developing partnerships between Lebanese churches and American churches.

Julia: I was born in Ukraine, and became a believer after a screening of the "Jesus" movie put on by an American missionary couple. God continued to develop my faith over the years through church involvement and my time studying missiology at Kyiv Christian University.

Khalil: I grew up in Lebanon and pursued a monastic life in the Syriac Orthodox Church, but my understanding of grace was unclear, obscured by formality and ritual. After reading a book called The Lamb, I came to understand the finality of the cross and accepted Christ as my personal savior, and since then have helped others understand the redemptive grace of the gospel.

We met at a conference in Kyiv in 2010 and immediately started a relationship. We got married a year later! Julia moved to Lebanon so that we could minister together. We praise God that nearly every evangelical church in Lebanon has now partnered with Horizons, bringing gospel-centered aid to their hurting communities amid the nation's continuing collapse.

Recently, we have both felt a calling to serve in Julia's homeland of Ukraine. The war has shown us that the moment is now; the entire country is beset by widespread murder, destruction, rape, and evacuation. The people bear grievous spiritual wounds. However, as the entire country suffers, God desires to use believers in Ukraine to help their communities heal.

We plan to open a Horizons ministry center in Ukraine, to help bring churches and ministries together to serve the people. Although wartime ministry can be dangerous, we trust in God's plan and are following where He leads. It is a privilege to be able to serve a God who loves us so abundantly, and to see the fruits of ministry as others come to know God's love through us.

Khalil and Julia Abdelahad

GLOBAL UPDATES

ISM AUSTIN / KEVIN CLARK



The ISM team in Austin, Texas recently hosted a soccer tournament in order to help local churches make evangelistic connections with immigrants, refugees, and international students. The "Cup of Nations" tournament included 10 teams with participating students from Burma, Afghanistan, Egypt, Palestine, Nepal, and several East African countries. Local churches served as Fan Clubs for each team, cheering them during games, and providing snacks and drinks, while building relationships with the players.

Several churches have already committed to make the event an ongoing mission opportunity. Through financial and administrative support, they will improve the tournament's operational efficiency and enable ISM team members to focus on connecting with international students.



DOUAR / TONY KAADY

The ministry team in Douar, led by Tony Kaady, has planned several evangelistic youth events this summer. In July, the team hosted nearly 350 kids in an all-day event that provided food, activities, and games, and led a time of worship and sharing the gospel. The evangelistic summer basketball program also relaunched in July.

This month, Horizons will also partner with a local church to host a three day camp for 50 kids, providing food, financial support, while Tony and his wife Rania will also help staff the event. A third event will engage around 100 kids in a number of games and activities to share the gospel. The team has also been recording Arabic video invitations to share information about the upcoming events with the local community.



ZAMBIA

Horizons' ministry partner World Outreach Team Action (WOTA), led by Pastor Barry Illunga, received its official letter of introduction from the Ministry of Education Provincial office in June. This letter will allow WOTA to launch Ignite Christian Service Bible Clubs in Zambia's public schools, as it provides coaching and mentoring support to students.

In June, WOTA concluded its Pre-Field Global Workers Training course, with 35 participants graduating at the event in Lusaka. Graduates will serve in North Africa and the Middle East region, as well as among the predominantly Muslim population of Zambia's Eastern Province. Horizons and WOTA are partnering to place some of the workers in Lebanon.



BEAUTY FOR ASHES

The Ukraine Crisis Fund Helps Churches Reach Refugees

The ongoing conflict in Ukraine has created an unparalleled chain of events that has displaced millions of Ukrainian citizens and sent ripples of impact throughout the world. Indiscriminate bombing has left thousands dead, while entire towns and villages lie in ruins, resulting in an unprecedented number of homeless. **An estimated 12 million refugees have fled via neighboring countries to seek new lives in Europe and beyond.** And amidst the devastation, there is copious evidence of war crimes and cruelty by Russian soldiers: the torture of civilians, forced deportations, the rape and abuse of women and children, and merciless killings.

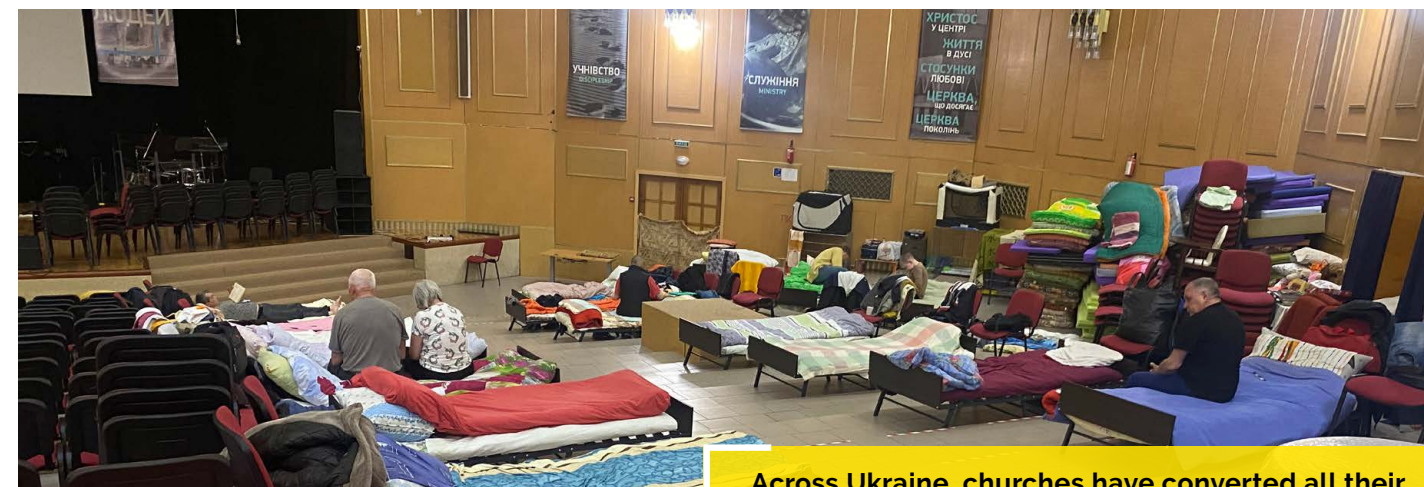
Yet despite the trauma and devastation that millions of Ukrainians are experiencing, God is at work. **At this unique and tragic moment in Ukraine's history, many have become spiritually open and are coming to faith in Christ.**

When Horizons staff members from Lebanon began taking regular trips into Ukraine in 2018, to train Ukrainian churches on how to reach Muslims, we never knew that the Lord could be preparing us for a time such as this. At the same time, **Horizons' Lebanon Crisis Fund (LCF)** began growing in scale and impact, helping Lebanon recover by positioning evangelical churches to take the lead in crisis aid and discipleship. **The LCF is serving as an effective model for how to build up the Ukrainian evangelical church to provide gospel-centered humanitarian aid.**

In April 2022, Horizons Founder and President Georges Houssey traveled to western Ukraine,

bringing with him tens of thousands of dollars worth of medications and financial gifts for churches in need. Georges witnessed firsthand how **the Lord is working through the local churches**, who are housing and feeding the overwhelming numbers of refugees that have fled conflict zones.

One pastor hosted more than 3000 refugees in his small church, many of whom had never heard



Across Ukraine, churches have converted all their available space, even chapels and sanctuaries, into refugee shelters.



the gospel before. He joyfully reported that most of them had received Christ while living at the church. The love and care of the pastor and church family was a powerful demonstration of the love of God. **As a result, many are now attending evangelical church services and Bible studies.** In a seemingly hopeless situation, Jesus has become their only hope.

As the Ukraine crisis has unfolded, **God called staff members Khalil and Julia, being themselves Lebanese and Ukrainian, to relocate their family to Ukraine and establish Horizons' ministry there.**

According to Khalil, "Ukraine is in ruins, but people are turning to the Lord. The abundant harvest of salvation has opened new doors to the gospel, but the people need deeper discipleship and regular care. Churches are working hard, and they need our support, not only to meet practical needs, but to help thousands of new believers grow into strong leaders."

When God called Horizons to start developing a network of churches in Ukraine over the last 4 years,

“ In the past 2 months, I experienced more repentance and prayer with people than in 25 years of ministry as a pastor. It is a real miracle! ”

— PASTOR OF A UKRAINIAN CHURCH

we did not realize He was positioning us to respond to this national crisis. **Additionally, the incredible fruitfulness of the Lebanon Crisis Fund showed how it can be a model for God's work in Ukraine.**

The Lebanon Crisis Fund works through partnerships to combine gospel-centered humanitarian aid with effective training that helps churches and believers to effectively share the gospel and make disciples. **This project has enabled Lebanon's evangelical churches to thrive in the midst of crisis, and empowered them to take a leading role in Lebanon's recovery.**

We want to see the same results in Ukraine; this is a powerful moment for the Church to rise up and bring Christ's transformation to a broken and traumatized people.

Khalil and Julia Abdelahad are developing a team of local staff members, who will begin visiting refugees, assessing needs, discipling new believers, and leading Bible studies. They will also work closely with ministry partners who provide shelter and various services, including trauma therapy for victims including widows, orphans, and pregnant women. **Over the long term, the team hopes to establish a permanent Horizons ministry center in the city of Lviv.**

Join us in prayer for Ukraine. We have seen God transform tragedy into triumph—and we pray that the present devastation would result in a wave of new believers who will bring God's grace and healing to their country.

LEARN HOW YOU CAN PARTNER WITH HORIZONS AND THE UKRAINIAN CHURCH:

SYRIAN REFUGEE CHILDREN RECEIVE EDUCATION AND HOPE

GOD HAS PROVIDED SPACE FOR AN 8TH-GRADE CLASS!



In the 2021-2022 academic year, School of Hope has continued to flourish, despite many challenges. The school, which serves Syrian refugee students in one of Beirut's poorest neighborhoods, was finally able to reopen in-person classes with full attendance.

Many of our teenage students are taking this season to seriously examine their own personal beliefs and are struggling with the difference between what they hear at home and what they hear at school. Often the biggest impact comes from students witnessing our teachers live out their Christian faith in their daily lives.

Throughout the year, we have been praying that the Lord would somehow provide the space to establish an 8th-grade class next year. We couldn't bear to send our 7th graders away, many of whom have been with us for years—including Ahmad, who has been with SOH since it was established in 2015! Unfortunately, the school had no more space.

However, where one door was closed, God opened another. The school building required numerous renovations due to damage this year—and the damages and repairs both

hindered the school's ability to operate, and forced it to move online a few times in 2022.

However, because of the new repairs and renovation, lead teacher Fatima had the idea to convert a kitchen and guest bathroom into a classroom for our new 8th-grade class! This was a huge answer to prayer, and now we are ready for our continuing 8th graders! Even still, however, the school premises remain extremely crowded as we are striving to provide education for as many kids as possible. Please pray that God would provide space for further expansion, and even allow us to add more School of Hope locations throughout Lebanon, to disciple a new generation in the love of Christ.

After adding the 8th grade this year, we are up to over 150 students and 17 staff members. Please pray as we continue to work with these precious children. We have great faith that as they grow in education and in faith, they will continue to bring change to their families, communities, and countries, in the name of Christ Jesus.



Graduation ceremony for another amazing class

LEARN MORE AND PARTNER WITH SCHOOL OF HOPE:

schoolofhope@horizonsinternational.org



UNASHAMED

2022 Legacy Conference

Ministers to Muslims are Empowered and Unashamed!

This June 8-11, Horizons' 2022 Legacy Conference hosted over 200 missions-minded believers in Grand Rapids, MI, and online—connecting some of the most fruitful evangelists, disciplers, ministries, and churches working with Muslims today. Strong biblical teaching, as well as close interaction and connection, impacted and encouraged many attendees. Christians from Muslim backgrounds were able to share their experiences, and provide valuable insight to those hoping to reach Muslims for Christ. Below are some testimonies from attendees who felt that Legacy 2022 blessed them:



"I had no idea how much I needed this. The Lord spoke powerfully and prophetically. I was overwhelmed by the sweetness of worship and the availability of time with others and with the speakers. I am working now with my group doing Muslim ministry to practice Josh McDowell's challenge to write and memorize our 3-5 minute defense of the Gospel." —a local worker engaged in mobilization and ministry to Muslims

"I needed to be with others doing this hard ministry and to get challenged, encouraged and refocus on the job before us." —a career missionary among Muslim people now serving locally reaching Muslims



"Legacy Conference 2022 encouraged me to be bold in my witness to Muslims and to avoid the pitfalls of Muslim idiom translations and modern contextualization methodologies. I was also able to meet the Horizons staff and learn about its programs and activities. The biggest highlight for me was having the opportunity to ask questions to the speakers and workshop teachers. I also enjoyed spending time conversing with like-minded people, and gaining new insights. The church was very generous and it made the conference very enjoyable to attend." —Scott, Legacy attendee

"Legacy started my Muslim ministry all those years ago and now I am part of training others at this Legacy. I was reinvigorated, my faith built after these past few years, and reconnected with others doing Muslim ministry." —an exhibitor and participant in the conference



If you missed Legacy 2022, don't worry—hours of conference and speaker videos will be made publicly available soon. If you receive Horizons emails, you'll hear about it—or you can check the Legacy Conference website listed here! We pray that these effective teachings will bless your ministry.

legacyconference.org

OUR WORK IS NOT DONE

TEN YEARS AFTER THE “SON OF GOD” PETITION, PROBLEMS PERSIST IN MAINSTREAM BIBLE TRANSLATION

Ten years ago, Horizons led an effort asking Wycliffe, SIL, and Frontiers to stop mistranslating “Son of God” and “Father” in Bible translations for Muslims. Horizons’ efforts, which **included launching a petition** signed by over 15,000 church leaders and members, shone a much-needed light on problematic Bible translation practices. Christians around the world realized that translators were not accurately translating key aspects of God’s flawless Word—which led to the conclusion that the Church needs to ask hard questions around accountability and transparency.



*“Son of God” petition
on change.org*



Unfortunately, hard questions are still required if we wish to ensure that least-reached cultures understand the gospel as Jesus intended it. Some prominent Christian organizations are not only continuing to produce deeply Islamicized and unfaithful translations, but leaders in these organizations are also actively seeking to produce similarly flawed translations for other groups, including Buddhist and Hindu majority audiences.

*If you haven't yet signed the
Arlington Statement and
shared it with your church
leaders and friends,
please do it today!
arlingtonstatement.org*

In 2020, Horizons oversaw the publication of the **Arlington Statement on Bible Translation**, which addressed many of the problematic issues occurring in Bible translation, and began building a coalition of faithful Bible translation organizations that commit to following sound practices.

To help Christians understand the state of Bible translation practices today, Biblical Missiology recently published an **article** laying out in detail the current issues in syncretistic translation practice. It references specific recent examples from Wycliffe, the United Bible Societies, SIL, and others. **Read it and share it**, so that you and those you support are equipped to promote faithful translations and protect believers worldwide from dangerous syncretism. And please pray for reverent, faithful translations of God’s Word for all nations!



*Article explaining
current issues in Bible
translation*

**LEARN MORE ABOUT CURRENT BIBLE TRANSLATION PRACTICES AND
MISSIONS WORK APPROACHES ONLINE:**

biblicalmissiology.org

YES! I WANT TO REACH THE WORLD FOR CHRIST!

Enclosed is my one-time monthly gift of \$ _____ to support missionary/project: _____

Plus a one-time

monthly gift to the Lebanon Crisis Fund:



CLICK HERE TO GIVE