

onthehorizon

..... Horizons International Newsletter – February 2022



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O SING TO THE LORD A NEW SONG...

PSALM 96:1

FOR HE HAS DONE
WONDERFUL THINGS...

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MUSLIMS

MEC WORSHIP
HOSTS BEIRUT
CHURCHES

NEW ROUNDTABLE:
MEC INTERNSHIPS
AND OUTSOURCING



YOUSEFF RAFIQ

A STUDENT'S TESTIMONY

My name is Youseff and I am a college student in Lincoln, Nebraska. **My family came to the U.S. as refugees** when I was seven months old, and I have lived here ever since. Growing up in the U.S., I never felt a strong connection to Islam, even though my parents are fairly devout Muslims. **As a teenager, I heard about Jesus, and I decided to follow Him at the age of 15.**

When I started college, I got connected with a Horizons staff member working in international student ministry. He quickly became a mentor to me and discipled me in my faith. I loved seeing his heart for international students, which truly reflects the heart of Jesus. **His example continually reminds me of the purpose and value of outreach,** and it has helped me strengthen my own witness for Christ.

Upon his encouragement, I attended a *Cubs to Lions* training event that grew my heart for ministry—especially ministry to Muslims. **I loved how simple and powerful the teachings were.** I was reminded that Jesus is for the whole world, and Muslims belong to Jesus. God used the teachings I heard to challenge my heart and my ambitions, leading me to reach out to others with the gospel.

Last year, God placed it on my heart to minister to my fellow students by **organizing a Thanksgiving dinner for my Muslim friends.** My church helped me host the event, and we had a great turnout. I was overwhelmed with joy to see everyone eating together, smiling, and getting to know one another. After the feast, we read a Psalm together, and I shared my testimony. **I talked about finding my belonging in Jesus, and how He has transformed my shame, loneliness, and fear into joy, hope, and peace.**

My friends were grateful to be invited and many expressed interest in coming to similar events in the future. **I know that God is calling me to extend His love to my Muslim friends,** and I am making plans to host more events so I can continue to point them toward Jesus.

Youseff Rafiq

GLOBAL

UPDATES

ZAMBIA

Horizons' ministry partner World Outreach Team Action (WOTA) is equipping educational leaders for Bible teaching through a program that aims to train 960 educators in 2022. The training sessions will take place in four districts in the North-Western province, with over 100 people attending each session. In addition, WOTA is establishing weekly Bible Clubs in local public schools that will enable ministry leaders to connect with and disciple students. ICS Bible Clubs will be launched in 10 schools at the beginning of 2022, and will expand as funding allows.



Zambian students train to serve as missionaries

KOSOVO

The Messiah Evangelical Fellowship (MEF) network in Kosovo just added a new church plant in Gjakova, one of the largest cities in Kosovo! This church plant serves roughly 20 Muslim-background members who meet regularly in their homes. Additionally, this longtime partner church just celebrated their 27th anniversary, and hosted other events such as a Harvest Festival that provided opportunities for fellowship and outreach. They have also launched a new class for theological studies, which currently serves 17 students through teaching and discussions.



Ministry leaders meet at the location of the new church plant in Kosovo

U.S. AFGHAN REFUGEES - INDIANA

When the Taliban took over Afghanistan in August 2021, nearly 100,000 Afghans came to the U.S. as refugees. Horizons has been seeking opportunities to minister to Afghan refugees through collaboration with local churches and ministries. In November 2021, Horizons partnered with Big Life ministry in leading a volunteer team to minister to the Afghan refugees based at Camp Atterbury, Indiana. The volunteers spent time playing games with the refugees, sharing food, and demonstrating God's love.

AROUND
6,700 TOTAL
REFUGEES

The team's weekly visits have opened up conversations and relationship-building opportunities with dozens of refugees. Through these relationships, Horizons hopes to connect refugees with local churches that can offer them

further support after they are relocated from Camp Atterbury to locations across the U.S.



Staff member Dan Maley drives a volunteer team to minister to Afghan refugees

CHURCHES IN LEBANON GATHER TO WORSHIP

by Avo Kazazian

**Communications Coordinator
& MEC Worship Team Member,
Beirut, Lebanon**

On October 23, 2021, Horizons Lebanon was honored to host a worship band competition for local churches in Beirut. This event, named *Sawti Ilak*—Arabic for “My Voice is Yours”—featured local church worship bands who each performed original songs. Over **50 Horizons staff members** were there to facilitate and encourage the gathering, which provided a platform for each band to bless others with their original music, encourage other bands to sing new songs to the Lord, and worship the Lord together.

In all, **five worship bands participated**, after two withdrew due to COVID illness. Bands shared their powerful testimonies of how they had received the songs from the Lord, the harsh conditions under which they had written them, and the beautiful inspirations behind them, which encouraged and touched the hearts of those present. The first-place winner, from Trinity Baptist Church, performed an

original song called “Doune An Nudrikuka,” which means “Even When We Failed To Realize.” As a gesture of encouragement, the winning band received the opportunity to **record their song in the Horizons’ MEC studios, and film a professional music video produced by Horizons’ media team**. Additionally, the members of all bands received home free gifts for their contributions to the event.

In all, approximately **250 believers from over 30 local churches gathered at the event**, which was held at the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary (ABTS). Together, they worshipped in a wonderful venue that featured high-tech music equipment, presenters, and a live social media broadcast. They voted for their favorite songs using a **state-of-the-art voting app created by the MEC Tech team** for this specific event, and a group of Christian professional musicians including faculty at the Lebanese Conservatory of Music served as a jury to give their feedback and guidance! This pioneering event filled the crowd with awe, wonder, and excitement.

After the performances, the event came to completion with a warm time of fellowship and refreshments, filled with great conversations, joyous moments, and the beautiful sound of many Christians from different backgrounds talking and laughing together. **This further enhanced the spirit of unity and cooperation, which was the main goal of the event.** One thing was very clear: the hand of the Lord was on us, pouring out His love, joy, and grace on all present, and using *Sawti Ilak* as a platform to build new relationships between believers from various churches.

In addition to those who attended the event, **hundreds of social media followers watched the live broadcast online**

from all across the world. The churches and the people expressed their sincere gratitude for our hard work and generosity. Many said they are excited to continue *Sawti Ilak* every year! **They also have asked us to host more events like this**, to bring believers together and release a unique blessing.

Many expressed, “This kind of atmosphere is exactly what we needed.” Others said, “In a time when the country is in deep distress and turmoil, you brought us joy and encouragement, which we really needed!”

This event is one of the many MEC Worship projects that we have prayerfully received from the Lord. **As a newly established cohort, MEC Worship seeks to help, support, and raise up worship musicians within the churches of Lebanon**, to bring about more breakthroughs, and along the way deepen connections with God



and each other. Some of our future projects include more themed worship events, and a database and app for gathering and sharing Lebanese worship songs. Additionally, **MEC Worship has started offering music lessons that are currently training over 50 believers!**

“How good and pleasant it is when God’s people live together in unity” (Psalm 133:1) is one of the principles that lie at the core of the MEC initiative. Through many endeavors, skills, and talents, we hope to help create and induce a holy atmosphere of unity and godly camaraderie, which enable the plans of the Lord to be made manifest in Lebanon and the Middle East.



“SING TO THE LORD A NEW SONG;
SING TO THE LORD, ALL THE EARTH.”
PSALMS 96:1

Learn more and watch the recorded event:

horizonsinternational.blog



HOW TO STORY THE GOSPEL TO MUSLIMS: PART 1

USING SIN AND MERCY TO ILLUSTRATE THE HEART OF GOD

In sharing the gospel with Muslims, and other people groups, a common stumbling block is the concept of sin as the fundamental separator between man and God. Addressing sin directly and even confrontationally can create inroads quickly and effectively. **The powerful technique laid out here was developed through years of street evangelism to Muslims**, and is currently taught alongside other approaches in Horizons' *Engaging Muslims with Christ* training course.

When Jesus fell under scrutiny for his relationships with sinners, he said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners" (Mark 2, Luke 5). In action, **Jesus was harsh to those who saw themselves as righteous**, knowing that talk of mercy is meaningless to those who don't think they need it. Throughout the gospels, he reserved the message of mercy and forgiveness to those who already recognized the weight of their sin.

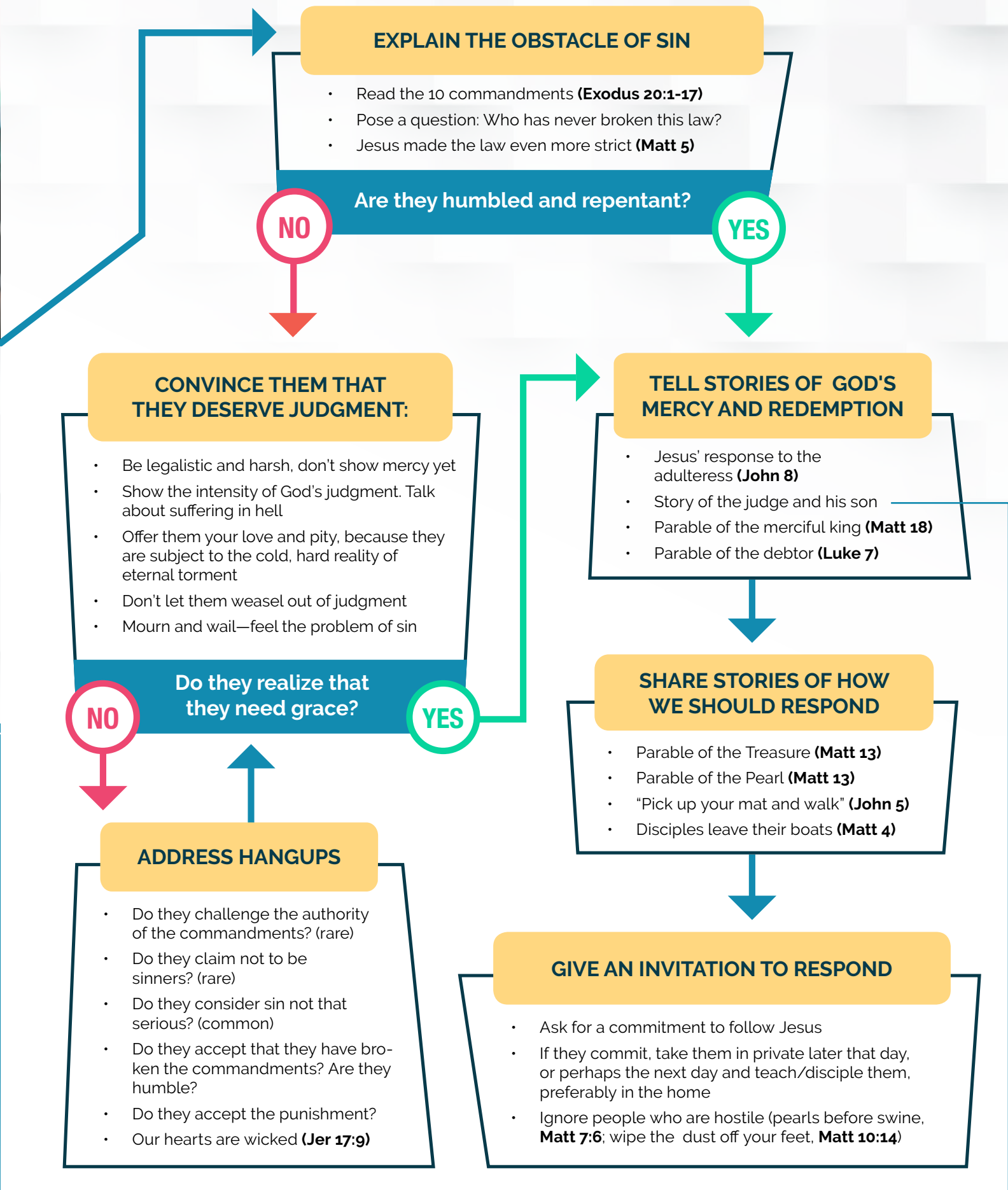
When often self-righteous Muslims hear that Christ obtained complete forgiveness for all their past, present, and future sin, they often conclude that **Christians have no incentive to be good people**. To them, the Christian's "license to sin" helps explain Western society's loose morals, and confirms their belief that Islam is a superior system of earning moral purity. This is why, despite our best intentions, **many evangelistic efforts come across to Muslims as preaching cheap grace**. If we don't help them understand God's holiness and the serious consequences of sin, they cannot understand how precious is the mercy that leads us to salvation.

This evangelistic approach focuses on dismantling self-righteousness, to prepare the listener's heart to accept forgiveness. Like Jesus, we must be hard on sin but merciful to sinners. The flowchart on the following page shows how to navigate a conversation from sin to salvation using specific stories, scriptures, and examples.

BONUS TIP FOR STREET EVANGELISM:

Start out by winning hearts! Muslims and Arabs generally respect people who share their beliefs with authority and assertiveness. Good stories to share:

- "When you pray, do not... when you give alms to the poor, do not... when you are fasting, do not..." (Matt 6)
- "Do not worry about food... do not worry about clothing..." (Matt 6)
- The Good Samaritan: "Which one of these was righteous?" (Luke 10)



Read this story and learn more:

horizonsinternational.blog

MEC INTERNSHIPS AND OUTSOURCING

A DIGITAL ROUNDTABLE

How can we build up the local church and support indigenous believers amid the ongoing economic crisis in Lebanon? **The MEC internship program provides local believers with paid training and service opportunities in areas such as tech, media, design, discipleship, and worship.** These programs are raising up leaders in Lebanon and equipping them to better serve their churches and reach their communities for the Kingdom.

Join us in February for an online Zoom call and hear from Horizons leaders who are training and supervising the interns. Hear how the MEC is building up Kingdom servants through practical skills training, and **connecting with businesses and ministries around the world to facilitate outsourcing solutions** that support the interns and staff.

At this roundtable, **you will connect directly to the team in Lebanon** about the many initiatives already making a Kingdom impact. Join in the discussion, ask questions, and help us pray for this exciting opportunity to build up the Church in Lebanon!

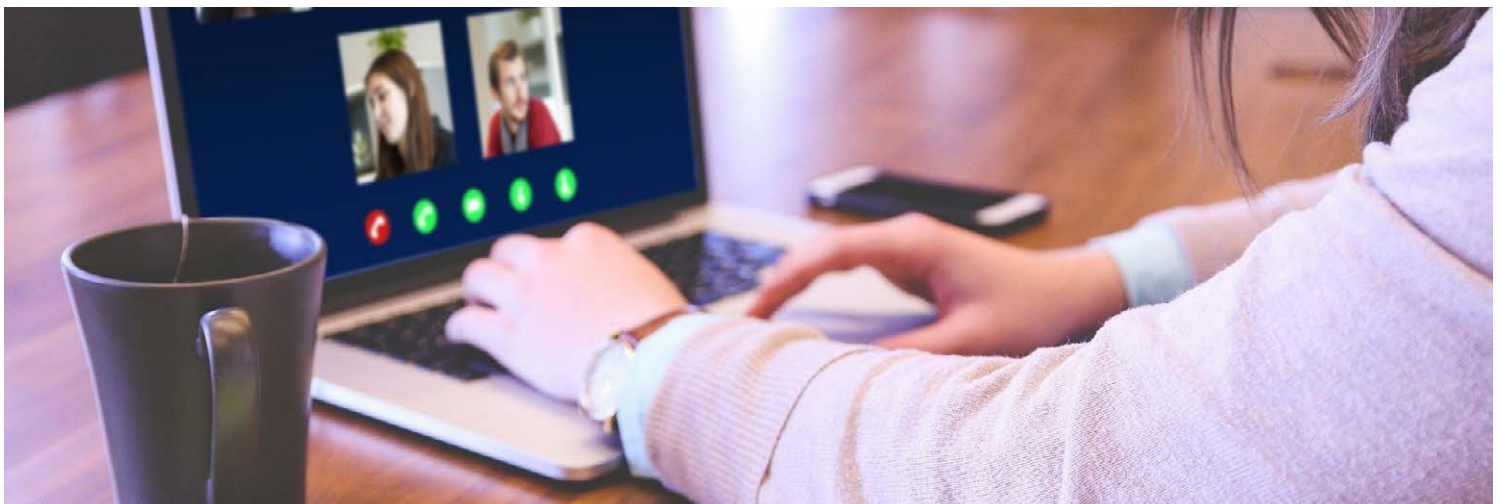
Digital Roundtable:

**Online Zoom
meeting**

**Wednesday,
Feb. 9
4pm MT**

REGISTER TODAY!

horizonsinternational.org/roundtables



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:



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