

on the horizon

Horizons International Newsletter - February 2024



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THE MIDDLE EAST

SPECIAL EDITION

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Horizons
INTERNATIONAL
proclaim. disciple. equip.



LENA AYNTABI

EMBRACING LOVE OVER HATRED: AN ARMENIAN MISSIONARY TO TURKEY

My father's steadfast example served as an inspiration for my encounter with the Lord at the age of nine. Through many difficult circumstances, he dedicated years to reading the Bible and communing with the Lord, and inspired me to do the very same. **But my father also did something very unusual for us as Armenians:** he taught us to forgive Turkish people for what they did to our people in the past.

For most Armenians in Syria and Lebanon, the Turkish language is offensive and forbidden. But our father allowed us to speak it and even watch Turkish TV. **So we are among the rare Armenians who are fluent in Turkish.** I never imagined how God could use that in the future.

While serving refugee children for eight years at School of Hope, I've had a growing desire to become a missionary in Turkey. At the Horizons global staff summit last year, I connected with our Turkish team, and their stories of house visits with families deeply resonated with me. After much prayer, fasting, and discussions with leadership, **I was sent from Lebanon to join the Turkish team as a missionary!**

My new ministry, in a small Turkish town, has been a divine blessing to me. The warm welcome and the similarities to my cultural background have made me feel at home. House visits and gatherings at the Horizons Ministry Center in Turkey give us **opportunities to meet numerous women, who we counsel** and pray for. We support families with essentials like food and cleaning supplies, which demonstrates the love of God that we preach.

Defne, a recently widowed woman with two disabled children, welcomed us in and listened to our testimonies. As we spoke of our own experiences with pain and grief, emphasizing how the Lord had been our source of comfort, she was deeply moved. Eventually, she tearfully embraced the Lord.

I'm so thankful that my father taught me to love Turks, and that his legacy has helped lead this Turkish woman to Christ!

GLOBAL UPDATES

Chaos and Dysfunction: A Call to Pray

📍 CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA

Staff members Allain and Nicole are persevering in their ministry in Cape Town, despite challenges. In late September, their car was broken into, resulting in the loss of valuable equipment. Unfortunately, these items were not insured, leaving them deeply frustrated. About a month later, their house was also burglarized. They are also facing spiritual opposition, particularly after sharing the importance of sharing the gospel with Muslims to local Christian leaders in Cape Town.

Please pray for Allain and Nicole, that God would give them grace, wisdom, and protection as they faithfully serve the Lord in South Africa. Pray against distraction and for encouragement as they remain focused on their ministry.



Engaging Muslim scholars in Cape Town

📍 SOUTH LEBANON — MEDICAL FACILITY

Purchasing a building for our medical ministry near the border of South Lebanon has been complex. A lawsuit was raised against the former owner of the building before we could complete the legal registration, as real estate registry offices have been closed for months, due to Lebanon's crisis. We are praying for the Lord's help in obtaining a clean title or getting our funds back and exiting the process.

Recently, the lithium batteries and control unit of our building's solar system were stolen. These vital equipment powered essential devices and the building's exterior lighting. Currently, the area remains mostly deserted due to bombings and skirmishes between Hezbollah and Israel. Pray that we can overcome these challenges and continue to meet the physical and spiritual needs of the people in Tyre and surrounding areas.

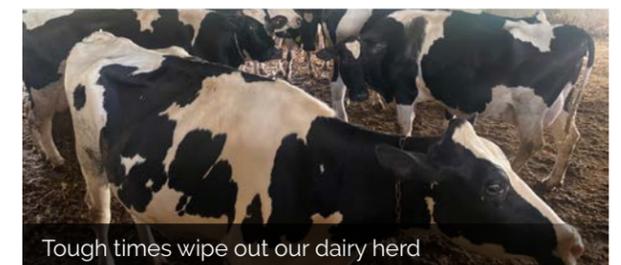


Legal hurdles stall our hospital project

📍 SOUTH LEBANON — HORIZONS FARMS

Two Horizons farms near the southern border were affected by a recent bombardment that damaged the main road leading to them, making access dangerous. Previously we had a successful dairy operation that provided affordable and much-needed yogurt to locals. However, importing fortified feed for the cows has become financially unfeasible. As a result, we have had to sell the dairy cows and shift our focus to other livestock.

The market in the area is constantly changing due to corruption and the influx of goods, which drastically affects the value of certain goods. Pray for wisdom in determining the next steps for our agricultural projects and how to meet the needs of the local community by providing locally sourced produce.



Tough times wipe out our dairy herd

EARTHQUAKE RELIEF UPDATE: ONE YEAR ON



Constructing shelter for survivors



The Cross stands above a destroyed church in South Turkey

In the early morning hours of February 6, 2023, while people were sleeping in their beds, the first of two violent earthquakes rocked Turkey and Syria. Through your prayers and support, Horizons was able to respond quickly to the overwhelming needs that arose from this tragedy, sending in teams to distribute humanitarian aid and share the hope of the gospel. However, the needs remain substantial.

Today, through our network of local churches and ministry partners, Horizons has provided shelter, food, and medical assistance to thousands of survivors in Turkey and Syria. We have also helped rebuild numerous homes and church buildings. In areas of the Middle

East that were previously closed to the gospel, **the Lord is working powerfully, turning the earthquakes into an opportunity to share the gospel** through the compassion of believers.

In Syria, Horizons Lebanon sent teams to several areas including Aleppo, Latakia, and Shahbaa, partnering with local churches to repair homes, renovate and expand churches, and distribute food aid, medicine, and clothing to earthquake survivors, including many internally displaced Kurdish Syrians.

- **Around 20,000 meals, along with mattresses, fuel, and clothing, have been distributed.**
- **Horizons teams are repairing around five houses each month.**
- **Ongoing funds are being sent to support ministry and repair work in the earthquake zone.**

In Turkey, Horizons provided tents and shelter to many families who were left homeless by the earthquakes. Ministry events, soup kitchens, and other avenues of evangelism created opportunities for the gospel to be shared with survivors. Many Bibles were also given to families.

- **Every month, around 400 families receive food aid and hygiene kits.**
- **Over 400 tents were provided in the immediate aftermath of the earthquake.**
- **Trauma counseling sessions have introduced Biblical truths to more than 250 women from Muslim backgrounds.**

Pray for Survivors

Despite the progress made, the challenges faced by the survivors remain overwhelming. Most of them have lost everything, and there are significant ongoing needs. Currently, there is a shortage of the following items:

- Food boxes to provide nourishment for earthquake survivors.
- Warm clothing, thick coats, and shoes for the winter season.
- Bedding and heaters to protect against the cold.
- Toys, stationery, and school supplies for children.
- Medicines, medical supplies, and surgical instruments to address healthcare needs.
- Workers to partner with teams in the field.
- Trauma support through biblical counseling and seminars.

Continued support of the Earthquake Relief Fund will enable earthquake survivors in Turkey and Syria to **receive this crucial aid—and the hope of the gospel!** Join us in praying for these resources to reach people most in need of the gospel.



Surveying earthquake damage in Turkey



Sharing a meal with earthquake survivors

The story of Ferit and Sevgl presented here by a Horizons staff member, is just one of many powerful stories unfolding in Turkey and Syria.

In March, our team traveled to Antioch to provide tents. During our visit, we met Ferit and Sevgl, a married couple who had become homeless. We replaced their old leaky tent with a new one, and in return, they thanked us by offering us coffee. During our conversation, Ferit surprised us by saying, "May God protect the Christians of Antioch and the churches that are helping us." His statement was just like a Christian prayer. He added, "May the Lord bless you." I was deeply moved.

In September, when we returned to the area, we discovered that Sevgl was serving in the Antioch church! Ferit had been deeply touched by the compassion and mercy shown to him by Christians and had become curious about the faith. He wanted to know why Christians were so loving. Ferit approached a local pastor and expressed his desire to become a Christian, asking for a complete explanation of the Christian faith. He accepted the gospel and began reading the New Testament. His wife, Sevgl, observed all this with curiosity about his newfound faith. After several weeks, Ferit shared the gospel with his wife in their tent—and she too accepted Christ!

The church in Antioch, along with the Horizons team, is helping to disciple Ferit and Sevgl in their new walk with Christ. This family trusted Christ because of the ministry they witnessed Christians doing after the earthquake.

BORDER CRISIS IN SOUTHERN LEBANON:

Medical Ministry Helps Alleviate Major Challenges



Escalating tensions between Hezbollah and Israel have led to a crisis in Lebanon's Southern border region, causing significant suffering and displacement for roughly 29,000 people. Many have been forced to leave their homes to seek refuge across Lebanon.

In response to this urgent situation, Horizons has shifted the focus of the Lebanon Crisis Fund to provide essential support for affected families and offer practical and spiritual help during this difficult time. **Horizons has identified the needs and developed a three-pronged approach to mitigate the consequences of current border tensions** and ensure preparedness to deliver gospel-centered aid and medical care in the event of a regional conflict.



Sharing the gospel in Southern Lebanon

To date, Horizons has assisted more than 500 displaced families. Approximately half of them have found shelter in Beirut, while the other half remain in the South. Additionally, we have provided mattresses to two evangelical churches in safer areas of South Lebanon. These churches are offering shelter to these families within their church buildings.

PROVIDING ESSENTIAL SUPPLIES

*One of the most urgent needs is to provide hygiene kits to those who are displaced. These kits will contain essential first-aid and hygiene supplies that can greatly improve their health and well-being. They include vital items such as first aid kits, pain relievers, medicine for children, antibiotic cream, shampoo, soap, toothbrushes, toothpaste, feminine hygiene items, and deodorant. By delivering these kits, **we can help these individuals and families maintain their health and hygiene** during this challenging time, and these practical items will give us opportunities to show personal care and share the gospel with them.*

Project Need: 500 First Aid and Hygiene Kits for internally displaced individuals.

Cost: \$20,300

ENSURING ACCESS TO CARE

*Horizons has recognized the need for an Emergency Medical Preparedness Plan due to the threat of war. Current supplies of medicine can only provide limited assistance to those in need. However, should the situation escalate, the demand for emergency medical supplies will skyrocket. **We urgently need to stock up on essential items** such as gauze, bandages, betadine, splints, antibiotic cream, I/Vs, syringes, and other medical items.*

To prepare for a worsening situation, Horizons' medical

Emergency Project Need, in case of escalation: Resources to operate emergency medical clinics for up to four months in the event of war.

Cost: \$100,000

ADDRESSING HUNGER AND NUTRITIONAL NEEDS

Current food aid efforts are limited and the needs far outweigh the available resources. Horizons has the logistical capacity to significantly expand our gospel-centered food distribution through ministry centers and partner churches.

*As thousands of families find themselves unable to earn their livelihoods due to displacement, **the demand for sustenance has reached a critical level.** Should the conflict escalate, a significant number of hot meals will be crucial for basic survival, and will be prepared in our Tyre Ministry Center's commercial kitchen.*

Project Need: 10,000 food portions for needy internally displaced families.

Cost: \$200,000

ministry team is reaching out to local physicians and nurses to volunteer in case of an escalation. Further resources are needed to provide transportation and food for the volunteers.

This project aims to raise \$25,000 per month for four months. These funds will be dedicated specifically to establishing an emergency medical clinic in preparation for war. If war does not break out, then these funds will ensure the continued operations of our medical clinics in Tyre and Beirut at \$6,000 per month.

Alternate Project Need, in case of no escalation: Resources to operate medical clinics in Tyre and Beirut for 12 months.

Cost: \$72,000

HOW YOU CAN PRAY

- Pray for peace in the region. While having a disaster plan is important, peace would be a better outcome for everyone.
- Pray for the needs of those displaced by the conflict. Many have lost everything and are facing cold winter weather with uncertainty about shelter and provision.
- Pray for salvation for those affected by the tragedy.
- Pray for the funding needed to properly equip the medical ministry.
- Pray for doctors and medical professionals to join us in ministering to those in need.



Providing gospel-centered aid to refugees

PROVIDE FOR THOSE IN NEED:

horizonsinternational.org/lebanon-crisis



FORGE FIELD MINISTRY TRAINING PROGRAM

Forge is a mission field training program for believers from outside the Middle East who want to be equipped for effective cross-cultural ministry, especially among Muslims. They will be trained for field ministry in Lebanon through one or two nine-month programs.

The word **FORGE** has three meanings that reflect the goals of this exciting new program:

Forge [fôrj] Verb:

1. "To make or shape..."

Forge is an intentional community where participants can allow the Lord to reshape and form them to be an effective tool for God's Kingdom.

2. "To create something (i.e. a relationship or alliance) that is strong and enduring."

Through Forge, participants will form lasting and meaningful Kingdom relationships with indigenous believers. These deep relational bonds will catalyze and enhance collaboration between churches and ministries around the world.

3. "To advance steadily, push forward, or make progress/headway."

It is no small feat to become an effective missionary in the Middle East. Forge provides the knowledge and experience participants need to make personal progress, in a supportive multicultural group of like-minded believers, toward advancing the gospel throughout the world!

Vision:

The vision of FORGE is to see Christ's disciples equipped to be salt and light, and proclaim God's Kingdom both near and far.

Mission:

FORGE's mission is to equip teams of cross-cultural servants of the Kingdom to fulfill the Great Commission.

Registration is open until the end of March;

DON'T MISS IT!

For more information and to register, visit

middleeastcenter.org/forge



CLICK HERE TO GIVE