



# CUTTING THE RIBBON

## THE CHURCH REBORN IN KOSOVO

on the horizon

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in this edition



RESTORING KOSOVO'S CHRISTIAN IDENTITY



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A BUILDING TO CALL HOME?



A HISTORIC CELEBRATION



EXCITING NEW PROJECTS



# RESTORING

# KOSOVO'S CHRISTIAN IDENTITY

When Femi Cakolli, Qefsere Nishevci, and Bekim Beka started meeting for weekly prayer in 1994, little did they know that their faith would eventually alter the course of Christianity throughout their homeland. **Kosovo was an ancient Christian nation, visited and preached to by the Apostle Paul** (Rom 15:19), but that identity was eventually overrun by centuries of Islamic rule and dominance. Yet the Protestant church in Kosovo was destined for resurgence—in part through the humble faith of three Muslim background believers.

When Georges Houssney miraculously entered the country and met the three in 1994, they were fledgling believers in their early 20s searching for sound Christian doctrine. Georges mentored and ministered to them, strengthening their faith and equipping them to bear fruit. Pastor Femi, who has served as Senior Pastor of B.U.M. for over 20 years, recounts: **“Georges inspired me to look strategically at God’s fields in Kosovo and beyond. That is why I wanted to start a church.”**



The first members of B.U.M. Church in 1994



The shed that served as B.U.M. Church's first gathering place, in 1994



Young leaders Femi, Qefsere, and Bekim in 1994



Georges preaching at an evangelistic revival



Georges with then-new Pastor Besim in 1995

However, God is a rewarder of the faithful. In 2015, after a decade of waiting and steadfast hope, the church finally received approval to build. Gifted \$150,000 from partner ministries including Horizons International, B.U.M. began construction on their new home. Two years later, in December 2017, the Prishtina community gathered with B.U.M. members to watch Femi Cakolli and Georges Houssney cut the ribbon on the new 9,000 sq.ft. Kisha Protestante Church Center—the **largest Protestant church building in all of Kosovo, and the first permitted to be built in over a decade.**

## THE BIRTH OF A CHURCH

Messiah Evangelical Fellowship, known in Albanian as Bashkësia Ungjillore e Mesisë or B.U.M. (pronounced "boom"), held its first services in a humble shed that could barely hold 10 people. However, that would not work for long; in the next two years, the church baptized 52 new members. In the three years after that, it baptized another 43. Home groups were formed, and eventually house churches. As Georges continued to visit with the church several times per year, he advised them on church structure and outreach.

In 1997, B.U.M. founded Tenda Publishing, Kosovo's first Christian publishing house in over 300 years. **After the Kosovar War from 1998-99, Tenda published survivors' testimonies of salvation through Christ and distributed them among residents and soldiers.** As Kosovars sought refuge in neighboring countries, their hunger for Christ grew—and upon returning to their homeland, many people rejoiced at church-sponsored feasts and celebrations.

After centuries of repression, Kosovo's Christian identity was beginning to grow once again. Between 1994 and 2007, B.U.M. moved through over 10 locations to accommodate their growing congregation, spending nearly \$150,000 on rent!

## A BUILDING TO CALL HOME?

In 2005, B.U.M. raised enough money from churchgoers and ministry partners to buy land in Prishtina for their first official church building! However, the rejoicing was short-lived. **The local government denied their application to begin construction on their newly bought land—for over 10 years!** Continually, every re-application and request was refused. According to Pastor Femi, this was especially frustrating because the government did not similarly deny Muslims the opportunity to build, and **“mosques were popping up like mushrooms.”**

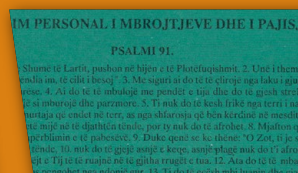
**“Georges inspired me to look strategically at God’s fields, in Kosovo and beyond. That is why I wanted to start a church.”**

Is God calling you to partner with this ministry? Visit: [horizonsinternational.org/give](http://horizonsinternational.org/give)



1994

OCTOBER 16 - B.U.M. CHURCH LAUNCHED.



1995

B.U.M. PUBLISHED ITS FIRST BROCHURES AND BOOKLETS.



1997

TENDA PUBLISHING IS LAUNCHED AS THE FIRST CHRISTIAN PUBLISHER IN KOSOVO, AND BEGINS PUBLISHING "LETRA E GJALLE" (LIVING LETTER), KOSOVO'S FIRST CHRISTIAN EVANGELICAL MAGAZINE.



1998-99

OVER 90% OF B.U.M. MEMBERS ARE DEPORTED DURING THE KOSOVAR WAR. UPON RETURNING, THEY BEGIN SHARING THE GOSPEL AND FIND KOSOVAR MUSLIMS TO BE VERY OPEN TO THE GOSPEL. THOUSANDS BEGIN ACCEPTING CHRIST!



2000

OPENING OF B.U.M. - SPONSORED CHRISTIAN BOOKSTORE B.U.M. - COM.



2001

GEORGES HOUSSNEY AND MUSLIM SCHOLAR QEMAL MORINA PARTICIPATED IN THE FIRST CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM PUBLIC DEBATE IN KOSOVO, ORGANIZED BY B.U.M. AND HOSTING OVER 400 AUDIENCE MEMBERS.



# KOSOVO CHURCH TIMELINE



**DEC. 23  
2017**

# A HISTORIC CELEBRATION CHRISTENING THE NEW FACILITY

The dedication ceremony of the Kisha Protestante Church and Christian Center took place on December 23, 2017. Broadcast on live TV, it was a celebration for all of Kosovo, drawing over 600 church members and their families, as well as community members and even heads of state and local government. **To B.U.M., the ceremony marked a home they can finally call their own—but to Kosovo as a whole, it was a historic moment, symbolizing the resurgence of the church of Jesus Christ.** After a decade of legal battles with the local Prishtina government, B.U.M. rejoiced in the vindication of their long-suffering hope. The celebration was held on the 500th-year anniversary of the Protestant Reformation, just before Christmas—and it offered food and drink, singing and dancing, and speeches and commissions.



Dignitaries gave short speeches, including the Dean of the University of Prishtina, who said that the presence of the Protestant church adds to Kosovo's diversity and safeguards the unity of the country against the growing threat of extremism. In addition, the **President of the Parliament, Kadri Veseli, affirmed that "the future of Kosovo is with the Protestant church,"** and praised the role of the church in Kosovo's society and culture. That's a truly amazing statement from a Muslim politician!



Georges Housney, honored as the main speaker at the event, explained the significance of the cross and recounted the history of B.U.M. Church, from its humble, early beginnings to its present glory. He encouraged Kosovar believers to persevere, grow, and go beyond their borders into neighboring countries with the gospel of hope and salvation. He also joined Pastor Femi Cakolli for a joyous ribbon-cutting ceremony.



To represent a unified Body of Christ in Kosovo, B.U.M. Church decided to name their new facility Kisha Protestante, which means "The Protestant Church."

The future of Christianity in Kosovo looks brighter than ever—but the work is not done. **The new building, while able to hold church congregations, is not yet fully completed.** When the rest of the interior is finished, it will house many other ministry initiatives:

- The new offices of Tenda Publishing
- A Bible School
- A Coffee Shop
- A Bookstore
- Conference Rooms
- Guest Rooms

With this building, B.U.M. hopes not only to serve its congregation, but the entire Church in Kosovo. B.U.M.'s many partner churches will be able to use the facilities as a gathering place, outreach center, and conference hall to promote unity and cooperation as they carry out the work of the Great Commission.



Pastor Femi's dedication message



Traditional Albanian dancing



Pastor Femi and Georges eating cake



Attendees at the dedication ceremony

**A remaining total of \$150,000 is needed for completion of the interior of the top two floors, as well as the purchase and renovation of adjacent land to become a parking lot.** Currently, the narrow road leading to the church is lined for blocks with the cars, as the only parking area for those attending church.

The need is great—but God has continually proven Himself a rewarder of the faithful. We hope you will join us in prayer alongside B.U.M. Church, and all Christians in Kosovo, that their steadfast hope will yet again be answered with open hearts and abundant generosity.



2002

B.U.M. PLANTED RINGJALLJA (RESURRECTION) CHURCH IN THE CITY OF GJILAN.



2002

B.U.M. ORGANIZED THEIR FIRST YOUTH CAMP IN ALBANIA, WHERE THEY BROUGHT 412 MUSLIM STUDENTS TO HEAR THE GOSPEL AND LEARN ABOUT JESUS.



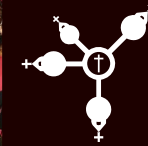
2003

FEMI CAKOLLI CONDUCTS KOSOVO'S FIRST OPEN PUBLIC BAPTISM OF 16 NEW BELIEVERS AT BATLLAVA LAKE, IN FRONT OF A CROWD OF 300 PEOPLE. MANY ATTENDING ASKED QUESTIONS AND RECEIVED PRAYER.



2003

B.U.M. CO-FOUNDS THE KOSOVO PROTESTANT EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE (KPEC), TO PROMOTE UNITY AND COOPERATION BETWEEN KOSOVO'S VARIOUS EVANGELICAL CHURCHES



2009

B.U.M. LEADERS RECEIVE THEOLOGICAL AND PASTORAL TRAINING AT BIBLICAL INSTITUTE FOR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT.



2011-12

NEW CHURCH PLANTED IN KAMENICA, WITH DENTAL CLINIC OUTREACH CENTER.





# B.U.M. CHURCH PROJECTS

## A THRIVING MUSLIM-BACKGROUND MOVEMENT

### 1 TENDA PUBLISHING HOUSE + BOOKSTORES

Tenda has published over 130 Christian titles in Albanian, including original work by Albanian church leaders and translations of significant works from English and other languages—including Georges Housney's *Allah, the God of Islam*. So far, Tenda has distributed over 500,000 evangelistic, discipleship and training publications. Additionally, B.U.M.'s organization BUM-COM oversees the only two Christian bookstores in Kosovo, which carry 70-80 titles. These include popular Christian books, biographies, commentaries, apologetics, and theological discourse.

**Need: \$33,250**

### 2 KOSOVO BIBLE SOCIETY

Currently, the only Bibles available in Kosovo are a 150-year-old Albanian translation, and a heavily-paraphrased Living Bible. Started in 2017, this historic project has partnered with Horizons' Biblical Missiology to create an accurate and literal translation of the Bible in the modern "Geg" dialect, used in Kosovo, Northern Albania, Macedonia, and Montenegro. It's truly exciting to see an indigenous Bible Society established by converts from Islam!

**Need: \$ 94,222**

### 3 "SALT AND LIGHT" HUMANITARIAN ACTION

Unfortunately, 70% of Kosovars live on less than \$1/day, and 34% of the population are unemployed. B.U.M. members gather secondhand clothes, donate food, prepare meals, and make house visits to those who are listed by the government as the most impoverished.

**Need: \$ 22,000**

### 4 LEADERSHIP TRAINING

B.U.M.'s pastors and future leaders attend trainings held by Engaging Islam and the Biblical Institute for Leadership Development. These trainings prepare leadership for evangelism, church planting, discipleship, and other aspects of engagement with Kosovo's Muslim-background population.

**Need: \$ 20,000**

### 6 DARDANIA CHURCH NETWORK

B.U.M.'s regional network of 6 churches and 3 home groups spans most of the major cities in Kosovo. With the exception of the church in Prizren, every member church was started by B.U.M.'s church planting initiatives, and all members coordinate their theological evangelical goals for maximum impact and outreach.

**Need: \$ 11,000**



### 7 B.U.M. CHURCH BUILDING

The largest and newest protestant church building in Kosovo, as well as the first built in over a decade, this building serves as B.U.M.'s new worship and fellowship hall. Construction on the top two floors will eventually house administrative offices, conference rooms, classrooms, visitor lodging, will make the facility function as a training center that will unify and equip the body of Christ in Kosovo. This strategic project remains incomplete until more funding is raised.

**Remaining Need, Renovation: \$ 90,000**

A parcel of land next to the church is now up for sale at a great price, and is needed for parking spaces that will allow the facility to accommodate larger numbers of attendees. A total of \$60,000 has already been raised by BUM and through Horizons' 2017 Matching Challenge. The remaining 50% must be raised and paid by December 2018.

**Remaining Need, Parking Lot: \$60,000**

# KOSOVO

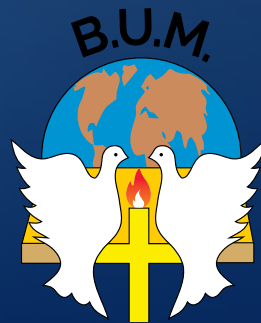


[horizonsinternational.org/kosovo](http://horizonsinternational.org/kosovo)

### Spreading Christ in Kosovo Today

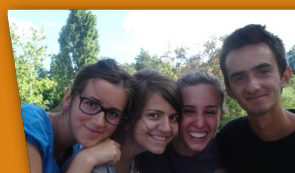
Today, B.U.M. is a thriving Muslim-background church with multiple outreach programs and nationwide partnerships. Its Dardania Network has provided unity, stability, and vision for the Body of Christ in Kosovo. In addition, B.U.M.'s Senior Pastor Femi Cakolli serves as President of the Kosovo Protestant Evangelical Church, a national evangelical alliance of over 35 churches in 18 Kosovar cities.

The Church in Kosovo is experiencing a revival unlike anything seen in centuries, as its members unite in the struggle to re-establish a strong Christian national identity. Our partnership and support ensures that the name of Jesus will once again be the banner over Kosovo and its people.



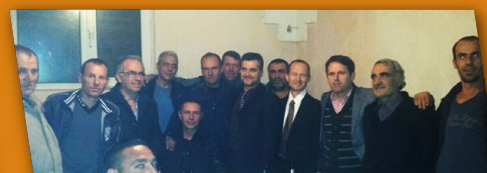
For more information about Messiah Evangelical Fellowship (B.U.M.) and Kosovar church history, visit our new blog at [www.blog.horizonsinternational.org](http://www.blog.horizonsinternational.org). You can also help us support Christianity in Kosovo financially, by visiting:

[www.horizonsinternational.org/give](http://www.horizonsinternational.org/give)



2013

NEW HOUSE GROUP PLANTED IN LIPJAN. MUSLIMS IN THAT REGION BEGIN ACCEPTING CHRIST.



2015

NEW CHURCH PLANTED IN DRENICA, AND NEW HOUSE GROUP PLANTED IN ISTOG.



2016

DARDANIA CHURCH NETWORK IS FORMED BETWEEN B.U.M.'S 6 CHURCHES IN MAJOR KOSOVAR CITIES.



2016

B.U.M. IS GIFTED 2.2 ACRES OF LAND TO BUILD A CHRISTIAN CONFERENCE CENTER BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF DRENAS. THE FIRST EVER SUCH GIFT TO THE PROTESTANT COMMUNITY.



2017

KOSOVO BIBLE SOCIETY ESTABLISHED TO TRANSLATE THE BIBLE INTO THE GEG DIALECT OF MODERN ALBANIAN.



2017

DECEMBER 23 — B.U.M. CHURCH BUILDING RIBBON-CUTTING CEREMONY AND 500TH ANNIVERSARY OF PROTESTANT REFORMATION, BROADCASTED NATIONWIDE ON TV.





# engaging islam

**BOULDER:** JULY 23 – AUG 3, 2018

**BEIRUT:** JUNE 4 – JUNE 15, 2018



## FOR THOSE WHO DESIRE TO REACH MUSLIMS

The Engaging Islam Institute is a two-week, in-depth course that prepares church leaders, missionaries, and local workers to engage Muslims with the gospel. Taught by effective teachers and fruitful evangelists such as Georges Housney, this acclaimed course is available both in Boulder, CO and Beirut, Lebanon. Attendees of the Lebanon course will experience hands-on training as they minister to Muslims in the streets.

## TOPICS COVERED

- History of Islam
- Islamic and Quranic Falsehoods
- Current Islamic Culture, Sects & Politics
- Biblical Missions Approaches
- Evangelism & Church Planting
- Mentoring and Witnessing to Muslims
- God vs. Allah, Jesus vs. Muhammad

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO BRING THE ENGAGE COURSE TO YOUR CHURCH, VISIT:

[engagingislam.org](http://engagingislam.org)

## ANNOUNCING THE NEW HORIZONS BLOG! [BLOG.HORIZONSINTERNATIONAL.ORG](http://BLOG.HORIZONSINTERNATIONAL.ORG)



# Yes! I want to reach the world for Christ!

Enclosed is my  one-time gift  monthly gift of:

\$50  \$100  \$500  \$1,000  Other: \$\_\_\_\_\_

To support: (Select missionary/project) \_\_\_\_\_

Plus: **Where most needed** \$\_\_\_\_\_ **Kosovo Ministry:** One-time \$\_\_\_\_\_ Monthly \$\_\_\_\_\_

B.U.M. Church Building \$\_\_\_\_\_ Kosovo Bible Society \$\_\_\_\_\_

Check  Credit Card - Type: \_\_\_\_\_ # \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Exp. (MM/YY) \_\_\_\_\_ CSC/CVV Code \_\_\_\_\_

