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Horizons International – October 2020 Newsletter

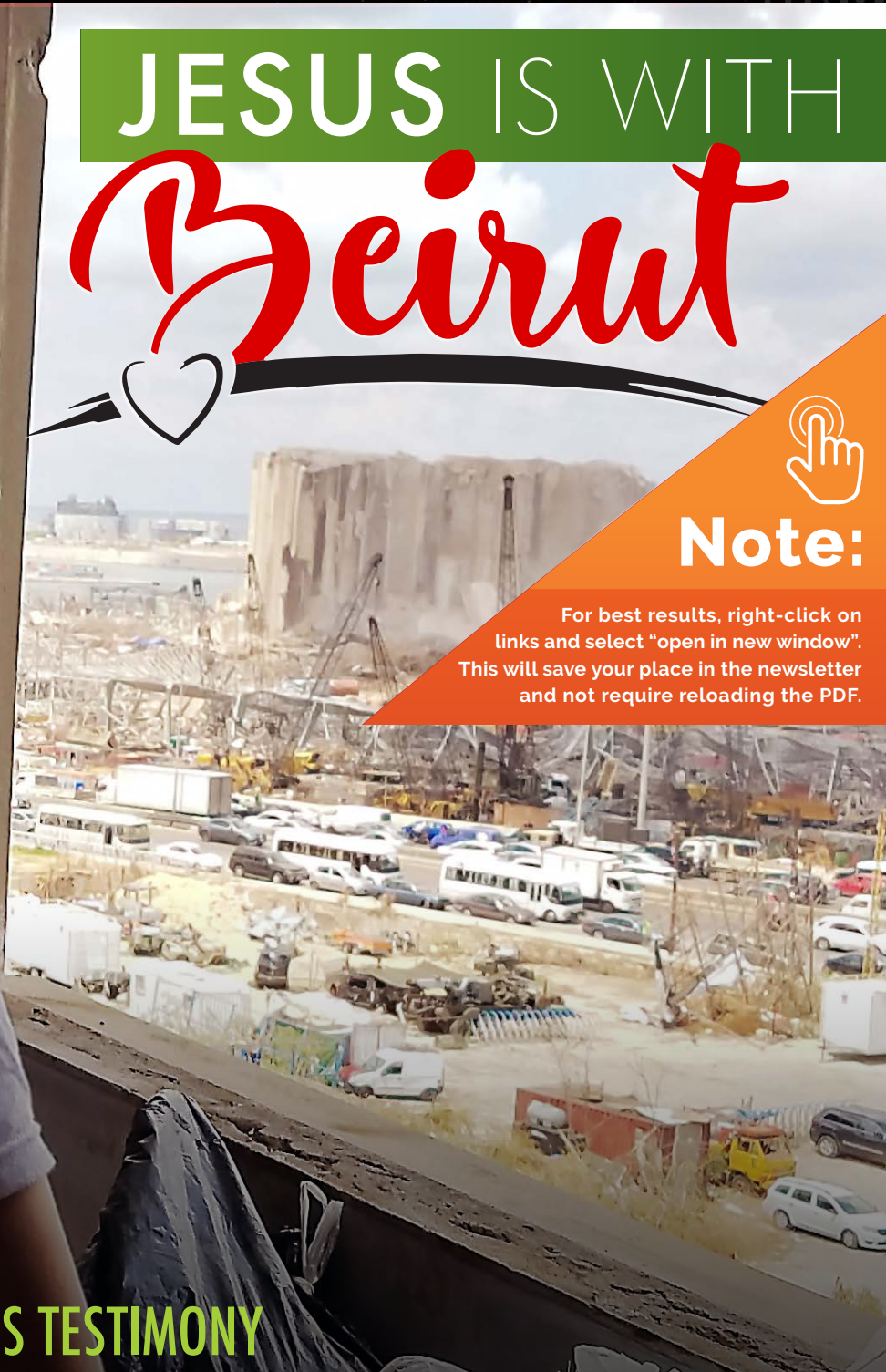
JESUS IS WITH

Beirut



Note:

For best results, right-click on links and select "open in new window". This will save your place in the newsletter and not require reloading the PDF.



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## HILKI: A FORMER MUSLIM'S TESTIMONY

My name is Hilki. I grew up Muslim in Kosovo, believing that Islam was the only true religion. While I frequently attended the Mosque to show devotion to God, I felt empty; my efforts at religion never gave me freedom from sin. Then, my cousin in Finland shared Christ with me.

I began earnestly reading the Bible and comparing it to the Quran, finding to my surprise that the Bible spoke with authority. I was confused, and began to pray earnestly that God would show me the way. After months of inner turmoil, I had a vision of Christ that convinced me I had truly found God. At twenty-one, I was baptized and my entire life changed. I became a new person and saw the world through new eyes.

Since then, I have had the joy of serving with B.U.M. Church in Kosovo. Our church was founded in 1994 when Pastor Femi and a couple of friends began meeting together for Bible study, and Georges Houssney began mentoring them through the process of planting a church. I joined them shortly after, and through Georges' mentorship, began to serve as an elder. I cannot imagine how B.U.M. Church would have grown in numbers, vision, and leadership without Georges' help and support.

In 2012, B.U.M. sent me to plant a church in eastern Kosovo. Eventually, this vision expanded from planting one church to establishing churches throughout Kosovo in villages where there are none. While Kosovo's Muslim religion and secularism creates tough ground for ministry, we have seen God at work. Through my years as pastor and church planter, I have seen hundreds of Muslims come to faith in Jesus, and we are already starting to see a transformation in Kosovo.

Just as Jesus has changed my heart, I pray that new believers will form communities that change our nation and culture as lights for the gospel. Bless you all!

Hilki, Elder at B.U.M. Church in Kosovo

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



## CUBS TO LIONS <sup>Update</sup>

Cubs to Lions is now being offered online! As part of a new initiative to provide discipleship and fellowship for Christians from Muslim backgrounds (CMBs), Horizons has started hosting twice-monthly online gatherings for graduates of Cubs to Lions conferences. The initial meeting on July 20th saw 19 CMBs gather with Georges Houssney for a time of practical teaching on marriage, as well as mutual encouragement and prayer. At that meeting, the graduates asked if the meeting could be held every other week!

Formed in response to travel and meeting restrictions due to coronavirus, this virtual adaptation of the effective Cubs to Lions training methodology is allowing CMBs to share and receive support in their difficulties with marriages, social life, faith challenges, and more. As these believers connect with those who have faced similar experiences and gain wisdom for the Christian life, we pray that their faith will be strengthened and proved out during this time of trial.

Learn about Cubs to Lions:  
[engagingislam.org/cubs-to-lions](http://engagingislam.org/cubs-to-lions)

## Campus Ministry Challenges

International students enrolled at universities are facing serious challenges due to the recent uncertainty about online and in-person scheduling. Coronavirus quarantines could force many to return to their own countries mid-semester. Amid these students' difficult decisions, International Crossroads has been adapting to new opportunities to support them through friendship, discipleship, and practical help.

In Albany and other locations, staff members have started working in other structures—such as tutoring, how-to seminars, and English language classes—in order to provide practical help that universities themselves can endorse and promote. These services increase engagement with international students, and open up time and space to build relationships. Additionally, some ministry locations are hosting outdoor social events that conform to local regulations.

The harvest is ripe, and even during the pandemic, the gospel has been spreading to students from all over the world. Please pray for ISM teams as a new and uncertain semester starts, that they can boldly share Christ's love with students.



International Crossroads



GLOBAL GOSPEL NEWS

# THE MOMENT OF IMPACT

## TRIPLE CRISIS SENDS LEBANON REELING AFTER EXPLOSION DEVASTATES BEIRUT

On August 4th, 2,700 tons of ammonium nitrate exploded in a port in Beirut, leaving over 200 dead and 6,000 injured. Since October, Lebanon has experienced an economic downturn and high inflation due to government corruption. In February, coronavirus lockdowns compounded the problem with hyperinflation and high unemployment, devastating Syrian refugees and Lebanese citizens alike. The explosion sent the city reeling, with hospitals overloaded and more than 300,000 displaced from their homes. The blast destroyed the national grain stockpile, as well as Lebanon's largest port, from which it receives most of its imports.

August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020

## Where were you on September 11<sup>th</sup>?

### HERE'S WHERE WE WERE ON AUGUST 4<sup>TH</sup>

The Beirut blast is considered one of the largest non-nuclear explosions in history, forever leaving its mark on Lebanon. Just as 9/11 was a watershed moment for all Americans, so the Beirut explosion will live on in Lebanon's national memory for generations. Read the testimonies of Horizons staff members who experienced that fateful moment:

**"I just stood in the middle of the room thinking, 'I should have a plan if there are more explosions!'"**

- Grace Teubl, Sponsorship  
Sponsorship Coordinator in Communications

**"God has to come first, and then I will come fish with you.' They made fun of my husband for going to the prayer meeting instead of going fishing at the port..."**

- Jwana Alnajjar, Field Staff in Missions

"That night I had planned to bring rent money to my landlord's house near the port. At the last minute, God pulled at my heart to stay home and pray, so I called her and cancelled. As I sat down to start praying, an explosion went off. I freaked out and looked outside to see what was going on and saw red flames rising. I backed away from the glass as **the TV and doors began rattling – our whole building was shaking.** Then the second big explosion hit. I thought, "We are dead. We will turn into ashes!" When things finally settled from the impact, I ran to make sure my mom was okay. She was afraid and thought our building was being bombed, so we clung to the wall. We tried to call my dad but phone service was down. We waited helplessly until it came back on and ensured he was safe. If I had gone to pay the rent and hadn't given importance to God's voice inside, I wouldn't be here to share this testimony.

**It is truly a miracle; every room in our apartment complex has broken windows except ours."**

- Patil Kazanjian,  
Training Coordinator in Middle East Center

**"The morning it happened, I had decided to meet a friend at the gym. I settled down in a chair to wait for him near the glass walls of the building. I felt strangely uncomfortable there and decided to move to a seat farther from the window ..."**

- Rezan Belal, International Teams Assistant at the Middle East Center

**"Dear God, please help the glass not to break again. Help me not to be afraid. Please fix all the windows in Beirut."**

- 5-year-old Rebekah Liss, daughter of Horizons team members Louis and Annie Liss.

To read the complete testimonies, just point your phone camera at this QR code, then follow the link that pops up!



# "JESUS IS WITH YOU"

HEALING A BROKEN CITY #يسوع-حَدِّك



To learn more, just point your phone camera at this QR code, then follow the link that pops up!

Through the Lebanon Crisis Fund, Horizons' 90 field staff members, wearing T-shirts that say "Jesus is with you," joined members from over 42 partner churches in ministering to people across Beirut, providing free sandwiches and hot meals, dry food portions, medical supplies, and repairs of shattered windows in homes and churches. Through this critical aid for communities, this relief initiative is providing opportunities to share the gospel and pray with explosion victims.

MAP LEGEND:

- Partner Church
- Horizons Facility
- Middle East Center
- Horizons Team Launch Point

In 3 strategic sites around the blast epicenter, Horizons set up tents which served as launch points for teams of staff and volunteers, logistical centers, and drop points for food, medical aid, and construction materials.

## BEIRUT

Several churches also hit the streets through their own outreaches, with supplies including those provided by Horizons, and joined up with Horizons teams to minister to the needy and traumatized. At least 15 of these churches had their buildings damaged by the blast, and Horizons is assisting with the repairs.

All of Horizons' facilities in Beirut were damaged by the blast, including glass blown out at the Nabaa Center, School of Hope, the MEC's offices and Kurdish Church Hall, and the Media Studio, where computers and equipment were thrown across the room.





# THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING LEBANON

Immediately after the horrific explosion in Beirut on August 4th, Horizons staff took to the streets to minister to those affected by this tragic event. Joining hands with our 42 partner churches, our staff teams are preparing and distributing food packages, repairing damaged homes, providing vital medical care, and taking time to listen to and pray with people impacted by this traumatic event.

The political protests, COVID lockdowns, and Beirut port explosion have destroyed Lebanon's already fragile economy and left millions of people in desperate need. As the country has reached a new level of crisis, Horizons' Coronavirus Emergency Relief Fund has been rolled into the new Lebanon Crisis Fund. Additionally, Horizons partnered with Christian author Ann Voskamp for the Show Up Now for Lebanon campaign. Through the Lebanon Crisis Fund and Show Up Now for Lebanon, we have currently raised over \$650,000 to provide critical relief work!

The economic crisis is showing no signs of improvement, and the Lebanese government reports that citywide repair costs will exceed \$10 billion. Additionally, significant increases in COVID-19 transmissions are now expected, with residents largely unable to follow the usual precautionary measures such as social distancing. The need is greater than ever.

*"My name is Hagop. Although I've been through hard circumstances in the last few years, I recently accepted the Lord Jesus as my personal savior. My financial situation is so difficult, but last week I received a Horizons food portion through my church—just at the right time. This was a sign that the LORD my God is with me, and He is faithful and will not leave me."*

*— Hagop, a Lebanese new believer*



Follow Horizons International on Facebook and Instagram to receive regular updates on Beirut relief and recovery work through testimonies, photos, and project reports.

Email us at: [connect@horizonsinternational.org](mailto:connect@horizonsinternational.org)

Support the Lebanon Crisis Fund Today!

[horizonsinternational.org/lebanoncrisis](https://horizonsinternational.org/lebanoncrisis)

# 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 Coronavirus Emergency Relief Fund:



**CLICK HERE TO GIVE**