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MERF News

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Middle East Reformed Fellowship—“Declaring the Whole Counsel of God”

Arabic Gospel Live Online

BY PASTOR VICTOR ATALLAH



MERF's Arabic media outreach programmes have proclaimed the Saviour daily for decades. The last decade, the 24/7 internet radio programmes at *Dardasha7.com* have gained a larger and larger following. 'Dardasha' is a warm Arabic word meaning "chatting." The friendly site is especially designed to appeal to young people in a personal fashion, with the slogan "Chatting from you and for you."

Gradually the growing listenership showed interest in more direct contact with the family of *Dardasha7*. At first, direct exchanges were limited --SMS telephone texts, email, and one-to-one chats by Skype and other social media. Listeners began to identify themselves as part of the family.

Challenge

As advancing technology made live online programming an option, the team realized that this would be very fruitful in connecting further with listeners. Always eager to bring the gospel more effectively, they took the leap of adding live programmes to the schedule of pre-recorded ones.

The new live programmes brought the challenge of immediately fielding live comments from listeners across the Arabic-speaking Islamic world in response to chosen topics, readings, drama or live dialogue. The idea was met with much excitement by the staff and local church volunteers prayerfully planning and making technical preparations. Implementation required

recruiting and training more staff and volunteers for production and follow up and thus, increasing costs. MERF's administration became convinced that the gospel rewards far exceeded the additional financial commitment and the Lord has continued to bless and provide.

Strategy

Live programming follows the same MERF media strategy as those pre-recorded: presenting the person of Christ in His beauty and His work as the true Saviour of fallen humanity in terms understandable to Muslims. Live programmes are widely advertized electronically. Listeners are invited to request topics of interest. Requests are many, including equality, racism, marriage, divorce, greed,

injustice, war, natural disasters, religious fanaticism, sport fan violence, pollution, unemployment, corruption, prayer, fasting and more. Each week chosen topics are announced ahead of time for the online live event.

Gospel Is A Must

Well-trained staff and volunteers prepare by prayerfully thinking deeply about ways to direct each topic to point to human sin and its impact on every area of life. Illustrations of the bad news of human sinfulness are vital prerequisites for the discussions to press home the need for God's saving initiative in Christ. Unless this is communicated to the listeners and visitors of "Dardasha7" all our efforts are pointless. Working to build the appeal and pop-



ularity of the website are for the purpose of sharing the gospel with as many Arabic-speaking people as possible.

Some of the most opportune topics relate to religious practices. Nowadays more young Muslims are discontented with answers of mullahs and imams. They want to do their own thinking and come to their own conclusions. So, Jesus' profound teaching about prayer and fasting and many other subjects are of much interest.

Bridges Without Compromise

For example, a recent live programme focused on the Muslim 'Eid el-Adha' (Festival of Sacrifice). Every year Muslims

remember that God spared Abraham from sacrificing his son (believed to be Ishmael, not Isaac) by providing a substitute lamb to atone for his sins. As they are able, Muslims are expected to make an animal offering, a goat,

“The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”

— John 1:29

sheep or cow. Animals are often slaughtered in streets and public squares. One third is for the family and two thirds are shared with relatives and poor neighbours. This subject provided a wonderful opportunity to emphasis the real

atonement for human sin, which only God can provide by Himself, as He did to the father of all believers, Abraham. This naturally led to explanation of how Jesus provided the perfect, acceptable divine atonement in Himself.

Fruit

Many interactions and messages poured in. Some Muslim participants strongly objected because they do not understand that sin cannot be forgiven without a sacrifice that fulfills God's just

and righteous demands. Others found the message meaningful, understanding that the person who died on the cross was a perfectly sinless human being, God's gift of Himself. This online programme was life-changing to some. HBN of Tunisia said:

“I must thank God more than I thank you for clarifying this mystery to me about our father Abraham and what the animal really was meant to imply...I am more than happy to trust in what God provides for my forgiveness in Jesus...”

Such responses give great joy to the Dardasha7 team. Please join us in thanksgiving and prayer for God's work in Arab and Muslims lands through MERF's Arabic and other language radio and online media ministries.

MERF-England & Wales
25 Church St., Willingdon, Eastbourne,
BN20 9HR www.give.net/MERF

MERF-Ireland
(charity no. 103181) 5 Mount Royal, Donaghadee,
Co. Down BT21 0QY www.give.net/20221778

MERF-Scotland
44 Hannah Wynd, St. Quivox, Ayr
KA6 5HB Scotland UK www.give.net/20035868

International Evangelical Church
Sundays 10:30 am & 6:00 pm – John Calvin Centre
57 Stylianou Lena St., Larnaca, Cyprus

