

MECO NEWS

CANADA

WINTER 2016/17



Making a difference

News briefs



Help from above



Ride for Refuge update

News in Brief



Sew on Fire is a Canadian charity that annually distributes over 32 tons of school supplies, personal hygiene items, clothing, shoes, baby layettes, hospital equipment and supplies to the poorest of the poor. The organization works through churches, ministries and mission agencies, and recently gave MECO Canada 450 pencil cases, filled with a pencil, pen, eraser and crayons. The pencil cases were distributed to African refugee children attending the African Hope Learning Centre in Egypt.

Substitute teacher

SAT-7, a Christian satellite television station that broadcasts in the Middle East and North Africa, has reported that unrest and war across the two regions has caused a crisis in child education. According to SAT-7, UNICEF and UNESCO, statistics show that one in every four children and young adolescents (approximately 21 million) is either out of school or at risk of dropping out.

Responding to the crisis, SAT-7 has begun broadcasting My School, an educational programme for displaced children.

Dr. Terence Ascott, SAT-7's founder and CEO, said, "Children need to be taught to think for themselves and be equipped and encouraged

to question, to be creative and to learn basic life skills. We must also address the needs and attitudes of parents and poorly trained teachers, most of whom have not themselves experienced education beyond rote learning."

Fadi Sharaiha, Executive Director of SAT-7 Canada, says the program will also benefit Syrian refugee children living in Canada.

Keep praying for church leaders

Middle East Concern, an advocacy organization for persecuted Christians, is calling for continued prayer for four Sudanese Church leaders, who have been detained by Sudanese authorities. The four men, Rev. Hassan Abduraheem Kodi Taour, Rev. Kuwa Shamal Abazmam Kurri, Abdulmonem Abdumawla Issa Abdumawla, and Petr Jasek (a Czech national) are standing trial on several charges - some of which could result in the death penalty or life imprisonment.

The four imprisoned Christians are able to receive visits from family members and their lawyers. However, Petr Jasek has been denied access to consular assistance.

Christians in Sudan ask that you would pray :

- that the four imprisoned Christians will know the Lord's strength and comfort during their ordeal
- for a fair judicial process - without any further delays - resulting in the acquittal of the four men
- for the families of the four men
- that church leaders and other Christians will know the Lord's peace in the face of increasing pressure against churches in Sudan
- that all officials involved will love mercy, act justly, learn about Jesus and choose to follow Him

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Please note that in some cases stock photos, pseudonyms* or initials* have been used for security reasons.

OUR PRIORITY:

To mobilize people and prayer for God's work among Middle Eastern people in the Middle East and in Canada.

For more information go to:

www.mecocanada.ca

Up Front

This issue of the MECO Canada magazine was not intentionally produced with the theme “Help” in mind.



Yet, as articles have been written it is the theme that has emerged! Within the pages of this issue you'll find three inspiring stories of how God has helped some of our colleagues as they faced challenges. You'll also read of how 14 people raised more than \$6,000 for three MECO Canada projects. A third article highlights how you can help advance the mission of God.

We know that God doesn't need our help but He does invite His people to join Him in His work. British theologian John Stott said: *Mission arises from the heart of God himself, and is communicated from his heart to ours. Mission is the global outreach of the global people of a global God.*

No doubt you have read stirring biographies and autobiographies of missionaries and wondered why God calls some to go. But the people who stay behind have an important role to play as well. The Apostle Paul said: *How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent. Romans 10: 14 & 15*

If we aren't the ones being sent, then we are the senders and there is so much that we can do and never more so than today!

Recently, a survey of the state of mission in Canada was completed. Called the *Canadian Evangelical Missions Engagement Study (CEMES)* it was a multi-phase research project examining the engagement of Canadian evangelicals and evangelical congregations in mission. Although there is a lot of information still to be “mined” from the interviews with more than 3,000 people, the initial results indicate what mission agencies have known intuitively for some time. The interest of Canadian Christians in mission service is waning, especially regarding long-term overseas service.

As discouraging as this is, I cannot help thinking: *But for God! But for His speaking to our hearts!*

To learn more about how you can help advance the mission of God turn to page 7.

Linda Haist
President

Help from above when most needed

The following vignettes are glimpses into some of our colleagues' experiences in the Middle East. They are a reminder that God is an ever-present help and that He hears our prayers!

While serving among refugees I met parents of two children whose skin blistered and burned dramatically when exposed to any sunlight. The mother of the children had five siblings who had died before the age of two from the same condition. I wrote to my parents and asked them to ask our church to pray that the children would get the medical care they needed.

Shortly after that, I was on a training course and happened to meet a dermatologist who was on a one week trip to the Middle East. I asked if he could visit the family. His explained that his time was booked but I prayed and asked others to pray and on the last day of his trip, the doctor was able to see the children and identify their illness.

The disease they have is called cutaneous porphyria. The doctor was able to provide answers for the parents as to why the children have the disease. It is genetic and caused when close relatives marry, which is common in the Middle East. Although the disease isn't curable the doctor said a geneticist might be able to provide help."



One Tuesday, during a regular Prison Ministry visit, our team had brought a group of new people to visit prisoners for the first time. When we got to the prison (an hour's drive away) I realized I'd forgotten my passport, which is required in order to get inside the prison. I felt really stupid. As it turned out the five new people had also forgotten their passports and they were feeling quite discouraged.

Then it dawned on me that God was in this mistake and we could use the time profitably by praying for those members of our team who were going in, for the inmates being visited and also for those who wouldn't have visitors that day. So we found a tree to sit under and prayed for a long period of time while the others were inside. It was a blessed time. When the team came out they said it had been one of the best visits they'd had with prisoners.

This reminds me of what I heard a person share recently: God is sovereign over everything – whether we are held up in traffic, waiting in line... or forgetting our passports!"



Minutes before I drove three friends to Petra, a popular tourist site in Jordan, I felt prompted to toss a small multi-purpose flashlight and a multi-tool into my backpack. Although I had never driven to Petra before I used a GPS to guide the way. However, on the return trip I missed a turn, which turned out to be a blessing in disguise.

Not long after missing the turn the car I was driving died in the middle of a six lane highway. It was late at night, very dark and with no one around. Because there were no lights I was afraid someone was going to come speeding along the road, not see our car and smash into it. Then I remembered the flashlight, which has an emergency signal. I pulled it out of my bag, and I placed it on top of the car. However, without the flashlight I couldn't see under the hood to find out what was wrong with the car. Just as I finished praying to the Lord for help, a car pulled up and a Jordanian man asked in impeccable English - the best I'd heard in Jordan - "Do you need some help?"

Together with my friends, we were able to push the car off the road. The man then parked his car facing mine giving me enough light to see that the connections to the battery had come free causing the car to lose power. It was a problem easily fixed with the multi-tool I'd brought with me. The other driver had cables to restart the car.

Before I had a chance to thank him, the driver disappeared into the night without saying good-bye. Only then did I realize that when he first approached me, he had spoken to me in English although in the darkness he wouldn't have know if I was Jordanian or European.

When I got back on the right road, I also realized that if I hadn't missed my turn the car would have broken down in a location where there was a far greater risk for an accident.



By walking and cycling in Ride for Refuge, 14 people have raised more than \$6,000 for MECO Canada projects.

The annual Ride for Refuge event was held across Canada Oct. 1 to help mission organizations and charities raise funds for their work among disadvantaged people. Participants in the event were sponsored by family and friends to cycle or walk set distances.

The 14 people who represented MECO Canada, made up three different teams. The money they raised will fund three MECO Canada projects:

- ☑ The African Hope Learning Centre, a Christian school in Cairo for African refugee children
- ☑ The Syrian Refugee Project, which will provide assistance to Brampton and Mississauga ministries helping 100 government sponsored refugees
- ☑ The Constant Lighthouse, a Christian school in Lebanon that provides education for children from poor Lebanese families, and sponsors a Saturday program for refugee Syrian children

This is the first time we have been involved in an event like this," said MECO Canada's President, Linda Haist. "It has given us an opportunity to provide much needed funds for the refugee projects our colleagues are involved in; funds we would not normally have to work with. We are most grateful to those who walked and rode on our behalf and to the people who sponsored them.

"What an encouragement it was for all of us to have people take time out of their busy schedules to participate in the event. Not only did they raise funds for our projects but they helped raise awareness about the needs of refugees in the Middle East and in Canada. One financial supporter, a retired school principal, wrote to us saying, 'Happy to support you. This is a worthy cause!' Until the event, he knew nothing about MECO Canada."

Since 2004, Ride for Refuge, has enabled 350 charities raise more than \$10 million for displaced, vulnerable or exploited people around the world. Last year the average charity, with two or more teams, raised \$10,329.

"What is amazing about Ride for Refuge is that it is volunteer driven," explained Linda. "It is volunteers who, on the day of the event, welcome participants, monitor routes, provide snacks and drinks before and during the event and lunch afterwards. They are there early in the morning, well before the first cyclists head off at 9 am, and long after the last participants have left. I walked in Hamilton, Ontario and was overwhelmed by the number of volunteers, their helpfulness and their commitment.

The next Ride for Refuge will be held September 30, 2017.



Different kinds of working but the same God at work

Some people think it is only “missionaries” who carry out the mission of God in the nations of the world. The truth is those who stay behind can be equally involved.

By requesting and reading this magazine, you are already engaging in mission **by learning** about MECO Canada and God’s work among Middle Eastern people.

You can expand that learning by obtaining a copy of Operation World and reading about all the countries in the Middle East. Operation World will give you an overview of each country, including population size, political structure, religions practised and challenges for prayer.

Another learning option is to read biographies of missionaries who have served in the Middle East, people like Samuel Zwemer, Henry Martyn, Raymond Lull and Elizabeth Bowen Thompson.

Taking Perspectives or Kairos courses will also give you a deeper understanding of the mission of God, not only with regards to the Middle East but the entire world.

Another way to be involved in mission is **by praying**. R.A. Torrey said, “The man or woman at home who prays often has as much to do with the effectiveness of the missionary on the field, and consequently with the results of his or her labours, as the missionary.”



Our colleagues in the Middle East and Canada need daily prayer support as they serve.

Churches, in the Middle East and in Canada, need prayer as they carry out their ministries to Middle Eastern people.

One of the greatest prayer needs that MECO Canada has is for more workers to serve in the Middle East and in Canada. The answer to that problem is to pray to the Lord of the Harvest.

How do you know what to pray? Use mission publications like this one as a guide and pray through what you read. For instance, pray through the opportunities listing on the back page of this issue and ask the Lord to send people to fill the positions listed.

Pray also in response to news stories you hear.

If you send us your email address, we will send you prayer requests as they arise.

Oswald Smith, founder of The Peoples Church in Toronto, wanted to be a missionary and applied several times to mission organizations but was considered too frail to serve. His response was, “If I can’t go myself, I will send someone else.”

By giving financially, people help mission organizations like ours to carry out the work God has called them to do. One donation combined with others makes it possible for people to go overseas and remain there. One donation combined with others makes it possible for a mission office to function, but that is just the tip of the iceberg. Giving can mean taking time to write letters or emails of encouragement. Giving can involve sharing a meal, loaning a car or offering accommodation to missionaries who have returned home on furlough. Giving can also mean volunteering your professional expertise to help mission personnel and boards.

There is a fourth way to become involved in the mission of God and that is to share what you know with others. **By mobilizing people**, by raising awareness, you will help advance God’s work in the world. If you have never done this before you can start right now by giving someone this magazine.



Opportunities to Serve

The opportunities listed on this page are just some of the ways that you can serve churches and ministries through MECO Canada. If you sense God calling you to serve in the Middle East or in Canada, you can be sure He has work for you to do. For more information email us at: info@mecocanada.org

Middle East

Donor Relations/Fundraiser

This position requires a person who has experience as a grant writer, as well as experience organizing fundraising events and tracking donors.

Phonics/Literacy Coordinator

This position requires an educator who can assess students and determine what literacy support they require. You will also be working with teachers to establish the individual help students require.

Curriculum and Teacher Support

An educator is needed who can assist teachers in using curriculum that is already available for their use, as well as locating and acquiring curriculum that is needed.

Volunteer Coordinator

The coordinator will establish job descriptions for volunteers, as well as recruiting and placing volunteers.

Canada

Syrian Refugee Outreach

Assist refugee families and individuals in the Greater Toronto Area. Assist with the development and implementation of programs for adults and children.

Outreach to Arab Women

Assist the founder of a ministry to Arab women living in Southern Ontario.

Sports Program for Children and Youth

Serve in a Christian sports program based in Mississauga, Ontario.

Church Ministry

Assist Arab pastors with their congregations in Hamilton, Cambridge and Toronto, Ontario.

For more information contact:

info@mecocanada.org

Does it not stir up our hearts, to go forth and help them, does it not make us long to leave our luxury, our exceeding abundant light, and go to them that sit in darkness?

Amy Carmichael