

A close-up photograph of a woman wearing a black hijab and a young boy with curly hair, both looking towards the camera with slight smiles. The woman is on the left, and the boy is on the right, partially overlapping her.

MECO  
CANADA

SPRING / SUMMER 2018

NEWS

HOPE FOR  
TOMORROW

*A first in Canada*



*Glimpse into the 4/14 window*



*Opportunities*

# YOUR PRAYERS NEEDED



*“Even a small service must be inspired by the Lord. Our prayer should be: Lord what do you want me to do? Where must I go? We can then remain in the centre of the will of God and there it is safe.” Corry Ten Boom*

We agree with the late Dutch evangelist, Corry Ten Boom. If the Lord doesn't inspire our work and if we aren't willing to be directed by Him, any work we do is in vain. For that reason, would you please join us in a weekly prayer vigil? To be involved, you don't have to travel any further than your own prayer closet and you can pray whenever you like.

## Please pray:

- That we will seek to be in the centre of God's will in all we do and that He will direct our work
- That God will direct our eyes to see where He is working and that we will join Him in that work without hesitation
- That God will provide the people and financial resources we need to do our work
- That we will be a blessing to others

## In addition would you please pray:

- For Churches in the Middle East and Canada as they seek to share the good news of God's love with their neighbours
- For an end to the civil war in Syria and for an end to the persecution of Christians by governments
- For wisdom and protection for men and women who are sharing God's Truth in the Middle East and Canada
- For those seeking truth to find Jesus
- For those who are persecuted for their belief in Jesus
- For those who persecute Christians to be convicted by God, as Paul was on the Road to Damascus
- For those involved in ministry to Syrian refugees – that the Lord will strengthen them, encourage them, and provide them with the resources they need to carry out their work
- That the Lord of the Harvest would send out more workers into His fields in the Middle East and Canada

***Thank you for considering these prayer requests. We look forward to seeing all that the Lord will do – not because we are worthy but because of His mercy.***

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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](http://WWW.MECOCANADA.CA)

# A MECO Canada First

It is a joy to announce that MECO Canada has appointed its first “in Canada” missionary.

For security reasons, the individual who has been appointed cannot be named, only referred to as “**H**”. That is because **H** came to Canada as a refugee, displaced by persecution not war.

As a person from the Middle East, **H** is in a unique position to help us assist churches interested in sharing the gospel with their Middle Eastern neighbours. **H** will also be able to help us prepare Canadians wanting to serve with MECO Canada in the Middle East and in Canada.

In the meantime, **H** is already involved in ministering to Syrians who have come to Canada. As a displaced person, **H** easily identifies with them as they try to settle into a new life in a country far different from their own. As a result, there is a level of trust for **H** that is opening the way for friendships to develop. Through those relationships, **H** knows that one day there will be opportunities to share a personal testimony that is as inspiring as Paul’s conversion on the road to Damascus. Sharing will have its risks but **H** longs to see others come to know Jesus, not simply as a prophet to be honoured, but as Lord and Saviour of their lives.

**H**’s long term goal is to minister to every Syrian who has come to Canada. MECO Canada’s goal is to build a team to serve with **H** across the country. It is an ambitious goal but anything is possible if God is leading the way.



It is evident to us and others that God has gifted **H** to serve. During the MECO application process one of **H**’s referees wrote: ***H** has a passion to serve the Lord unconditionally.* Another referee wrote: ***H** has always desired to shared Christ...even when this has been difficult or has opened **H** up to criticism and persecution. **H** has exhibited a deep desire to serve people no matter what and to share Christ in every way.*

Will you also pray for MECO Canada as we seek financial provision for **H**’s ministry? We are asking God, who owns the cattle on 1,000 hills, to sell some of those cattle for **H**. You see, **H**’s ministry with MECO Canada is dependent on the Lord’s provision.

I don’t think it is an accident that **H** has come to serve with MECO Canada. Like George Muller, who lived and worked by faith, the Board and I believe that if God has arranged this for the glory of His name, then He will provide the funds we need for **H**. We just have to have faith and believe.

If you would like more information about **H**, or if you would like to meet with me or **H**, please don’t hesitate to contact our office.

Thank you for your prayers for **H** and for us!  
**Linda Haist**  
President



# A GLIMPSE THROUGH THE 4/14 WINDOW

According to mission strategist Luis Bush, 80 per cent of all Christians accept Jesus as Saviour before the age of 15. He notes that children between the ages of 4 and 14 are a demographic grouping that is most open to the gospel message. Describing this age group as the 4/14 Window, he says it is a “profoundly formative period when perspectives are shaped either positively or negatively and when a view of one’s own significance or lack of significance is formulated.”

Dr. Bush, who lectures and writes about the 4/14 Window, stresses that Scripture is very clear about the importance of children. In his booklet: *Raising Up a New Generation from the 4/14 Window to Transform The World*, he writes: “Have we really listened to Jesus’ teaching about the place of children in the kingdom of God? First, they model the essence of gospel faith and faithful discipleship by showing us how to humbly repent and to trust in the God of salvation. Second, to ‘welcome’ a child – that is to accept, love, value and respect a child – is to welcome Christ Himself. Finally, as Jesus made very clear, whoever neglects, abuses, hinders or turns away a child from faith in Christ will face severe judgment from God Himself!”

MECO Canada is privileged to have four people serving in Christian schools in the Middle East. They will return to Canada this summer with some heart-warming stories to share:

“A teacher at our school had a one-on-one conversation with a young boy who told her: ‘I know Jesus is knocking on my heart but I haven’t opened the door yet.’”

+ + +

“There is a boy in our school who always kept his left hand in his pocket. When his teacher asked him why, he showed her his badly crippled hand. Clearly he was ashamed of it so the teacher asked him what things he liked about himself. With tears in his eyes, he said he liked his legs, his feet, his ears...but he did not like his hand. His teacher shared that there are many things we can choose in life but his hand was something he could not choose. She then told him that God had made him and not to be ashamed but to tell people his story. The boy no longer keeps his hand hidden in his pocket.”

+ + +

“I have been teaching Christian religion to 30 Grade 8 students. It was such a joy for me when the students asked me, and other teachers, to fast and pray for them before they wrote their final exams.”

+ + +

“God has used a muddy patch in our school yard to create extra play space for our students. In an attempt to keep the children and our school clean, we decided to bring in a load of sand to cover the mud. In doing so we inadvertently

created a very large ‘sandbox’ that draws the children like a magnet. To see the joy on their faces as they play has been priceless.”

+ + +

“How do you break down walls built by privilege, prejudice, poverty and rejection? Bring together Grade 4 students from an expensive private school for children from wealthy families, and Grade 4 students from an under-funded Christian school for underprivileged refugee families. Then have them collaborate in arts and craft activities and watch them gain a better understanding of one another. Afterwards, one of the teachers from the private school told us we have ‘an awesome school’. He’s right. We have been blessed by an Awesome God who has provided the right people needed to create a sense of community and service in a tiny school where children can learn about the God who loves them and who has a plan for each of their lives.”

*The schools where our colleagues serve are in great need of people to volunteer as teachers or teacher’s aids. Former teachers or recent graduates would be an asset but teaching qualifications aren’t always necessary. People can serve in a number of ways for a month, three months or for as long as they can. Please pray to the Lord of the Harvest to send out workers from Canada. Please share this need with people you know who love working with children. For more information contact MECO Canada at: [mecan@on.aibn.com](mailto:mecan@on.aibn.com)*



# NEWS BRIEFS

## CNMM Conference

The Canadian Network of Ministries to Muslims will hold its bi-annual conference in Toronto November 1-3. The keynote speaker will be Abdu Murray, the North American Director of Ravi Zacharias Ministries. For more information contact: [conference@cnmm.ca](mailto:conference@cnmm.ca)

## No time for missions

A fourth report based on the Canadian Evangelical Missions Engagement Study looks at how churches connect and communicate with missions and missionaries. It reveals that evangelical Christians generally believe mission is important but few people have the resources of time and energy to deeply engage with mission. The report also indicates that those people who do engage attend church and read their Bibles frequently. Read the entire report at: <https://www.evangelicalfellowship.ca/cmrf>

## Recommended reading

Are you seeking to know more about Islam? These books might be helpful to you:

- Touching the Soul of Islam: Bill Musk, 2nd edition 2004
- Understanding Islam: A Guillaume
- Introduction to Islam: D Brown 2nd Edition 2009
- The Crescent through the Eyes of the Cross: Nabeel Jabbour

## Advocacy through prayer

Middle East Concern (MEC) is an advocacy group for persecuted Christians in the Middle East and North Africa. MEC sends out regular prayer requests for persecuted Christians. If you would like to be put on their email list, contact MECO Canada's office for details.

## Dinner and a movie

People often ask if MECO Canada can recommend resources to help them share their faith with Middle Eastern neighbours and colleagues. We have Jesus DVDs, as well as DVD movies

about the Apostle Paul and Mary Magdalene. All three movies are in multiple languages. We also have booklets about how to entertain Muslim guests. What could make for a better evening with friends than dinner and a movie? If you would like any of these resources, contact our office.

## Answered to prayer

Middle East Concern (MEC), an advocacy group for persecuted Christians in the Middle East and North Africa, has reported the release of Slimane Bouhafs, a Christian arrested and imprisoned in Algeria in 2016 for insulting Islam.

Slimane, aged 51, chose to convert to Christianity in 1997. Although he was given the maximum sentence for blasphemy – five years' imprisonment and fined \$850 – his sentence was later reduced to three years. A year later he received a partial presidential pardon which reduced his prison sentence to 16 months. The pardon came after Slimane was attacked in prison when a sermon delivered by an Imam incited hatred towards Christians.

Algeria's laws hinder the freedom of Christians to practice their faith and to share religious views with others. In recent months greater enforcement of these laws has resulted in a wave of church closures and the arrest and harassment of other Christians.

## Algerian Christians ask people to pray:

- thanking the Lord for Slimane's release and for protecting, sustaining and encouraging him during his time in prison
- that Slimane will know the Lord's healing, restoration and ongoing wisdom as he adapts back to regular routines
- that the regulations governing non-Muslim worship and blasphemy will be amended so that Christians will be able to worship freely
- that Algerian officials will know the conviction of the Holy Spirit and the forgiveness and new life offered by Jesus

# NEW CANADIANS TO NEW CANADIANS



In bringing Middle Eastern people to Canada, God has opened the way for Christians here to witness to them. Some of those witnesses are new Canadians themselves. All are people MECO Canada is helping, in a small way, to carry out their ministry. Although we can't share their names we can share a few of their stories:

**W and A** are from the Middle East and have been working in a Canadian city for nearly 10 years. They have organized summer programs for children whose parents have come to Canada from all over the Middle East, have provided community meals for families once a week, as well as to celebrate holidays, and have studied the Bible with individuals wanting to learn about Jesus.

In another city, **J**, who came to Canada 20 years ago, has been drawn into ministry among Syrian refugees. Already involved in a compassion ministry, she had access to free furniture and offered it to refugees she "happened to meet" during a public event marking their arrival in Canada.

As she became acquainted with more and more Syrian newcomers, she easily identified with their experiences settling in a new country. Having immigrated to Canada, she understood the struggles they were having with language and culture, as well as their loneliness. As a result, her ministry to them unfolded. Winning their respect and trust, as well as their love, has opened the doors to their homes and to conversations about Jesus.

"I don't understand their language," she says, "but it isn't a barrier for us. I love them and they understand that."

**D** came to Canada as a refugee in 2016. In his homeland he had been involved in Christian ministry. Since arriving he has been learning English with other refugees. In day-to-day conversations he has been able to share his faith in Jesus. As a result of his witness at least five people have come to accept the Lord as their Saviour in the last year.

Nine years ago, **A** and her family came to Canada from the Middle East, where she was involved in a ministry to help poor, uneducated women. By meeting their physical and emotional needs, she and her team were able to help them understand God's love for them. Since coming to Canada, A has established a similar ministry that is reaching out to 150 women from the Middle East, many of them Syrian refugees. Her ministry has developed from offering events, with Christian professionals speaking on topics of interest to new Canadians, to providing practical help. For the last three years, she has held Christmas gatherings where the story of Jesus has been presented to families wanting to know about Him.

*Please keep all of these people in your prayers.  
Pray, too, that the Lord of the Harvest would commission more people  
within Canada to share His good news with newcomers.*

# Opportunities to Serve

The opportunities listed on this page are some ways that you may serve churches and ministries in the Middle East and Canada through MECO Canada. If you sense God calling you to serve, you can be sure He has work for you to do. For more information email us at: [mecan@on.aibn.com](mailto:mecan@on.aibn.com)

## Middle East

### **Grant writer, administration support staff, faculty**

These are not paid positions. Support will have to be raised in order for you to serve.

### **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 each student requires.

### **Curriculum and Teacher Support**

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

### **Teachers**

Qualified teachers are needed for all grades. You will teach in English.

Willingness to learn Arabic is important.

### **Donor Relations/Fundraiser**

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

## CANADA

### **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.

### **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.



*"To stay here and disobey God – I can't afford to take the consequence. I would rather go and obey God than to stay here and know that I disobeyed." Amanda Berry Smith*

*For more information contact: [mecan@on.aibn.com](mailto:mecan@on.aibn.com)*