

"JESUS IS WALKING AGAIN IN THE MIDDLE EAST"

BRIGHT HOPE NEWS



I have just returned from a trip to some of the most challenging places in which Bright Hope World has partners. I was challenged by the profound, deep work I saw. People are being empowered, lives are being changed, families and communities are exploring new ways of living and thinking. It's largely silent, grassroots and viral.

In one Middle Eastern location, a partner said to me, "Jesus is walking again in the Middle East". Something is happening that's hard to put your finger on. Every week people come to the church wanting to know about the 'prophet Isa'. They are desperate to know him and easily respond to him when they hear about who he is and what he has done. At a superficial level, I was startled by his comment as there doesn't seem to be a lot of 'Jesus influence' in the news from that part of the world. There were riots in Lebanon, the country where this partner lived. People were protesting and burning tyres in the streets, eventually forcing the government to resign.

At the same time, in Lebanon, a new wave of refugees was coming across the border from Syria. Turkey attacked the Kurds in northern Syria to create a safe zone. It wasn't very safe for the thousands uprooted again or for the hundreds of people killed in the bombing. Neither did it do anything positive for the huge number of Christians who were just beginning to regain some semblance of normality after years of war. More violence, more death, more loss. Neither did his "walking" seem to do much for the hundreds of thousands of refugees in Turkey living in hostile, dangerous makeshift camps. Or the Iraqi Christians trapped in Jordan for years unable to work as another winter approaches with snow, ice and bone-chilling cold.

What did he mean, "Jesus walking again in the Middle East?" Maybe it looked something like this. Nalah is a refugee from Syria who lost two sons in the conflict. She escaped with her only surviving son and her husband and found new life and purpose after meeting Jesus in Lebanon. Ezzat is an Egyptian working in Turkey among Syrian and Kurdish refugees, who has seen more than 200 families come to a new faith in the last two years. Mary works with traumatised women and children in Lebanon and is seeing wonderful breakthroughs in their lives as they slowly emerge from the depths of despair and brokenness.

You'll not read about these people on social media or see them on TV. Day after day they turn-up, roll up their sleeves and do the hard yards of serving their people; relentless like the ocean tide. They often carry in their hearts some of the trauma of those they serve. It's impossible to bear another's burdens without carrying some of it yourself. Inevitably some of their trauma transfers to you if you're genuinely involved. In fact, if you don't take some of it off them, they will never be free. It's true, Jesus is walking again in the Middle East and this time his name is Nalah, Ezzat and Mary.

Kevin Honore
New Partnerships Facilitator

Our partnership facilitators for India recently returned from a trip visiting our partners there. If you go to our website now, you won't find our partnership facilitators' names.

You will also not see most – if not all – of our partners in India. We have done this for very real security reasons.

India is now, essentially, a closed country. People arriving for any kind of 'Christian activity' are being turned away. Most Christian organisations have lost their charitable status. Believers are being persecuted and many have lost their lives.

This means we can no longer promote online what our partners in India are doing. We can't tell their stories or talk about their successes and challenges. This is heart-breaking and sad, but we will still be visiting and supporting these dear brothers and sisters.

Bright Hope World Office Christmas Closure Dates

Our office will be closed from Tuesday 24th December and will reopen on Monday 6th January.

The last La Mai coffee orders for 2019 need to be in by lunchtime on Monday 16th December in order for them to be sent before Christmas. Normal coffee ordering will resume on the 6th January, 2020. Any standing orders that are due during this time period will be sent out prior to Christmas.



HK lost her husband to a terrible accident in 2014. He was a construction worker who had a fall and sustained a traumatic brain injury which led to tuberculosis and eventual death. He likely refused medical treatment for the TB because he was hiding a secret from his wife: he was HIV positive.

While alive, HK’s husband sold illegal alcohol for work and was a drug addict.

Now a widow, HK lives with her husband’s family some distance away from her own family in Nagaland. After his death, she was stuck in the village, and left to care for four children, with her husband’s family members who are radical Hindus. HK was abused and persecuted by the only family she had left. They called her unclean and refused to eat with her. HK’s brother-in-law is a drunkard who has locked her out of her home and even threatens to kill her. HK calls our partner’s mother her refuge, big sister, and the biggest way God has provided for her needs during the difficult situation she is still living in.

To provide for her family HK spent a period of time selling illegal alcohol but was able to give this up once she received a job at Delight Cafe as a housekeeper. She speaks of how this job has “totally changed my life” as tears fill her eyes. She speaks of the joy of learning new things, like mopping, cleaning, welcoming customers, and teaching others things she has learned. She says this job and cafe is a home to her.

It is where she can laugh rather than cry, and make jokes rather than live in fear. She is still living in a community of abuse and persecution and she knows she cannot live like this forever. Thankfully, this job and her new family have offered hope for a future and change in the midst of grief and pain.

For security reasons, we are currently unable to have more information on this partnership on our website.

1. Pray for the wonderful work that is happening in the Middle East even in the midst of upheaval and suffering. Pray for our partners there who are serving in often difficult circumstances and at considerable personal cost.
2. Pray for our partners and the long journey they are on seeking to transform their communities.
3. For HK as she lives in such a difficult situation and for our partners who are ministering to her in a life changing way.
4. For all our India partners who are coming under increasing scrutiny and persecution for their faith. Please be focused in prayer for this part of the world as it becomes darker and darker spiritually and Christians are increasingly targeted.
5. For provision of a new Christchurch office. We will be moving to 39 Carlyle St, Christchurch on December 1, 2019.

