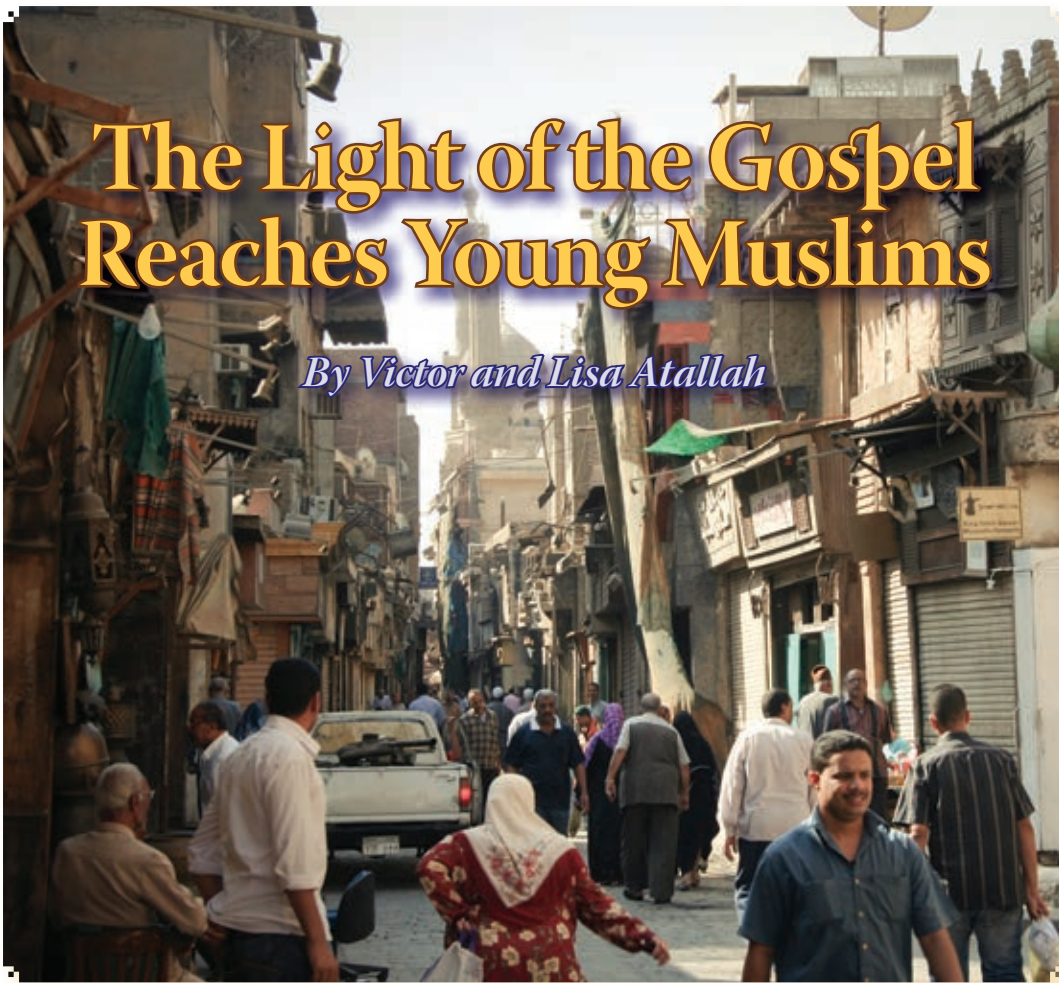




## The Light of the Gospel Reaches Young Muslims

By Victor and Lisa Atallah



Left: Arabic broadcasts reach crowded Cairo and other cities.

About a year ago the "Arabic Spring" began! Popular uprisings of young people in Arab countries have, thus far, brought down three longstanding regimes ruled by elderly men. Internet and mobile phone communication played a major role in building momentum to enable young people to dislodge regimes in **Tunisia** and **Egypt**.

The conflict in **Libya** has been tribal, with the winning side supported by Western powers. The worst bloodshed occurred there, where violent clashes between rival groups continue. In Libya, the two recognized evangelical/reformed churches were closed down, and contact has been lost with almost all Libyan believers. In Tunisia,

the new authorities promised a strong clamp down on missionary activities.

### *Impact on Christians*

Ironically, the new regimes seem to be moving to impose stricter Islamic rules on society—not the longings of most of the protesting youth. Some radical Islamists have even dared to claim majority support.

It is too early to guess how far the Islamists will succeed in gaining power and imposing Islamic Sharia laws on these and other Arab countries. Yet already there are major implications for moderates and religious minorities. Two Islamic groups together took a strong majority in the Egyptian parliamenta-

ry elections. How this will impact the large Egyptian Christian minority is still unclear.

### *Active Prayer*

The mobilizing of youth and rising insecurity has affected the church in Egypt, however, in some positive ways. Young people have been emboldened to take more initiative to be involved in church life and outreach activities. Christians have become more unified and more actively prayerful in the face of declining security and an uncertain future.

Troubles simmer elsewhere. In **Iraq**, a predominantly pro-Iranian Shiite government controls the country. Violent rivalry between

Sunni and Shiite radicals continues the bloodshed and suffering that began with the Iraq war more than ten years ago.

Iraqi churches continue to be attacked and the number of remaining Iraqi Christians dwindles, but they keep shining the light of the Gospel. MERF enables Arab churches in Iraq and **Palestine** to maintain an active ministry of the Word and to provide for the needy in their communities.

In **Syria**, the secularist regime which advocates freedom of religion is under attack. Fanatical Sunni Islamists have been trying to take over. If they succeed, the consequences will be immense for Christians in Syria, **Lebanon**, and other neighboring countries such as **Jordan**. They too are driven to prayer in the face of an uncertain future.

### *Young Muslims Seek Christ*

Please pray especially for the broadcast ministry teams in Cairo, Beirut, and Khartoum. Pray also for those expressing interest in Christ and new believers, as well as those providing

*For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.  
—2 Corinthians 4:6*



Iranian converts has begun preparing **Farsi broadcasts and a new Farsi website** aimed at reaching youth and educated people.

◆ Despite insecurity in South Sudan, a **new 5-month Biblical Training Course for South Sudanese** and other East African Christian workers began last month just south of the border in **Lokichoggio**, Kenya. Praise God for Jim Smith from London, who taught the opening English classes.

Pray for February Guest Instructors. Ian and Helen Maclean from Northern Ireland are teaching introductory Bible Survey and English. Ewoud and Willy Gosker from the Netherlands will teach Genesis, portions of Isaiah, Psalms and Proverbs, and John's Gospel, plus English.

Praise God for students from many different tribes. Please pray for their time of study and for their families in their absence.

*Top: Feghali of Lebanon helps train young Iranians for Farsi broadcast and internet outreach; Below: The Holy Spirit, Our Helper—New Arabic Sunday School teacher's guide.*

spiritual nourishment to them. We can give thanks that except for a few days of security concerns, the team in Cairo has continued to do production work. On those few days, the team in Beirut made up for the shortage.

Even more encouraging is the flow of new SMS text and email messages and the large numbers young Muslims visiting the Arabic ministry website. Here are two heartwarming responses to the broadcasts.

**E.M., high school teacher from Yemen**, wrote:

*"Finally, through your help, I am able to have spiritual meetings with two other believers; one has been a disciple for at least three years..."*

**M. M., a university student from Egypt**, wrote:

*"I have been struggling about my own existence for many months...I have even thought of suicide...You are truly God's good messengers..."*

We praise God for all who pray for and support this and other MERF ministries in Arab and Muslim lands.

### Other MERF News

◆ The historic **Heidelberg Catechism** has been published in both Amharic and Arabic.

◆ The eighth series of the **Arabic Sunday school curriculum** structured on the simplified Westminster Catechism is now published, "The Holy Spirit, Our Helper"

◆ Work on the 5-floor **training and broadcasting centre in Addis Ababa**, Ethiopia is nearing completion. It will house broadcast production of Amharic, Oromo, and Somali language programmes and lodge 70 students for biblical training. Also, a small clinic will provide outpatient medical care in Christ's name for the many poor in the neighbourhood.

◆ A young team of



### MERF-Australia

Dr Noel Weeks (Chairman),  
Pastor Terry Flanagan (Clerk)  
Dr Peter Barnes, Rev John Baxter,  
Dr Greg Fox, Rev Keith Noldt

For donations by credit card please contact:

Mrs Jan Flanagan (MERF Australia  
Correspondence Secretary)  
Phone: 1300 509 502

### MERF-New Zealand

Rev Kenneth J. Campbell (Chairman),  
Mr John Wilkens (Coordinator) Phone: 09 537 1782  
Email: merf@merf.org Website: www.merf.org