



ARABIC LUTHERAN MINISTRIES



ANNUAL REPORT

The Vision and Strategy

Developing and offering theological and pastoral formation curriculum, in Arabic, by using publishing and technological means such as social media and satellite televisions. Connecting with local communities. Recruiting and training Arabic speaking pastors and Church Planters.

Target Group

Christian Arabs and Muslims (Arabs and non-Arabs)

The Goal

To reach the non-believers and Disciple the believers.

Arabic Lutheran Ministries exists simply to carry Jesus' mandate and mission.



As a 503-C Charitable Corporation and a Recognized Service Organization, (RSO) we follow and apply mission priorities adapted by the Synod's mission and ministry emphasis, *Making Disciples for Life*

Arabic Lutheran Ministries plant, sustain, and revitalize Lutheran churches. Support and expand theological education. Perform human care in close proximity to Word and Sacrament ministries. Collaborate with the Synod's members and partners to enhance mission effectiveness. Promote and nurture the spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being of pastors and professional church workers.

The State of Our Ministry

When I look at what God has done through Arabic Lutheran Ministry it amazes me. I have seen how God takes the little things we do at ALM and watched Him bless them and make big things happen resulting in great impact. For instance, a few years ago I began to record my Sunday sermons in Arabic on a regular camera and post them on YouTube and other social network platforms. That little initiative has grown to a global media ministry! Through your financial support and prayers, we are now able to professionally film and edit discipleship programs that are biblically sound and confessionally based. The teaching segments reach out to Arabs and Muslims. Islam challenges Christianity on many levels. The most important one is the theological challenges. The segments that I film addresses and responds to these challenges.

In addition to posting the segments on You Tube and other social network platforms, ALM was able to partner with one of the largest Christian Satellite Networks in the Middle East and North Africa, *Sat7*. According to their website, the channel reaches over 516 million viewers.

The momentum of our social and digital media presentations took off during COVID-19 when people were stuck at home and turned to Christian programming. God took a tragic worldwide pandemic and turned it into an opportunity for good. We reached so many people last year who had never heard the Gospel and we were instrumental in strengthening the Body of Christ all over the world. I cannot count the hours I spent on WhatsApp, Facebook, Messenger, and Viber ministering personally to people from all over the world. They watched my teaching before and reached out to me for more conversations.



Behind the Scenes of our Global Media Ministry

Vision for the Future

If pandemic has taught anything, it is that online is here to stay. Just as corporations who considered online as merely an add-on have withered and died (Sears, Kodak, Etc.) so churches and ministries that overlook the online communication revolution will likely not thrive. Just as the invention of the printing press played a large part in the 16th reformation, so now the inventions of online videos, podcast, and virtual connections are tools for us to use to reach people with the Good News of the Gospel. We need to develop and implement a strategy for what online ministry looks like at Arabic Lutheran Ministry. The plan is to develop a hybrid ministry that can leverage both in-person and online communication to help people find their hope in Christ.



One-on-one Conversation and sharing the Gospel with Arab Muslim over lunch and tea at a Middle Eastern restaurant in Saint Louis. For security reasons we hide the identity of the person. Dr. Bahkou has been ministering to him for over 2 years. Dr. Bahkou regularly visit these places to meet with Arabs and Muslim and build relations with them

What I have discover that average person today has little to no knowledge of the Bible. Very few ministries are serious about helping people understand what the Bible says, what it means, and what does it mean for them personally. There is almost nothing in Arabic language that broadcast and minister to people from a Lutheran perspective... To create these platforms is not cheap. It takes a lot of financial commitments. We praise the Lord for your financial partnership.

That is what we always did, and that is what we will always do at the global media ministry at ALM. It is the uniqueness and the signature of our ministry.

Developing and offering Lutheran theological and pastoral formation curriculum, in Arabic, by using publishing and technological means such as social media and satellite televisions.

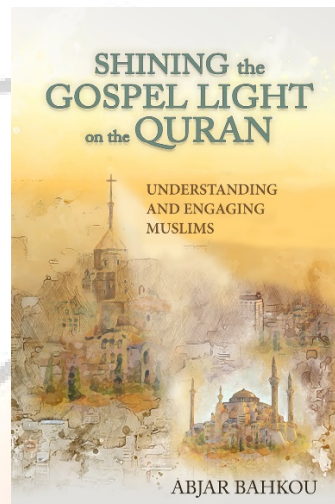
Many people around the world follow Arabic Lutheran Ministries for strong presentation of Bible teaching. We need however to create additional programming for those who do not understand the bible or spiritual issues. So, while we have not changed our content, we are creating additional ways to deliver it, and we are defining it in a different way so that we meet the need of people where they are today.

Reaching Muslims in America

Locally we are expanding our outreach to the estimated 7 million Muslims living right here in American. This is a critical stage of our vision.

One of the most recent initiative is the release of Dr. Bahkou's book *Shining the Light of Gospel on the Quran, Understanding and Engaging Muslims*, published by CPH in November of 2021. Dr. Bahkou wrote this book specifically for the purpose of equipping the members of the

body of Christ here in America on how to engage with Muslims. The approach used in this book can be divided in four steps; *first* critically and respectfully engage with Islam and its teachings, examining the primary sources of Islam and its implications on life of ordinary Muslims. *Second*, offer the Christian perspectives on the Islamic teachings, and what are the radical differences between the teachings of Islam and Christianity. The *third* step is to offer perspectives on how to answer, in a respectful way, the Islamic challenging questions to Christians. The *Fourth* step is offering practical ideas on how to minister among Muslims, and how to present a contextualized Gospel's message to them.



Saint Peter encourages Christians to revere Christ in their hearts and “always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect” (1 Peter 3:15). I believe that the reason of the Christian hope is found in Jesus Christ the Incarnate God, who suffered, was crucified, died, and rose on the third day conquering Death, Sin and Satan. The hope is in the cross of Christ where God meets us, his straying, rebellious, human creatures. On the cross God reveals who He is and who humans are. This is the most challenging point between Islam and Christianity. The message of the cross is foolishness to Islam while for us it is the power of God (1 Corinthians 1:18). This book offers practical suggestions on how to share the reason for our hope in gentleness and respect.

Vision and Philosophy of Spreading the Good News of the Gospel

God had given us one of the largest delivery systems of the Gospel in the world; a delivery of radio, television, print and digital media.

I believe that such an amazing opportunity comes with a great deal of responsibility.

We are looking at more and more ways to infuse and sharpen our focus on evangelism into what we do. There are so many people who still do not know the Lord.

How do we do this? First, we focus on the Word of God. God has called us to teach His Word. Second, our commitments to excellence in the products, presentations, and programming of our global ministry. I hear from people all over the world that the professional quality of our products and presentations is one of the core strengths in attracting people to the Bible and our confessions. We would not be on international satellites if we did not have the excellence in

production quality at Arabic Lutheran Ministries. You could have the best message in the world, but if the package is not God-honoring, the message will not be seen or heard.

This takes a huge financial commitment to implement this vision and continue producing excellent quality materials. And we praise the Lord for your financial support.

The Risk

There is always risk in what we do, it has become part of our DNA and who we are as a ministry. As we try new ways in reaching the world we step out in faith and minister to people in risky area and places. It is risky even when we do it virtually.

The world is not pounding on our door asking us to share the Gospel with them. There is no evangelical mindset in our culture. There is no biblical worldview. Here in the West secularization, relativism, tolerance, and atheism are sweeping over our culture and politics. It is even penetrated in churches and ministries. In the Arab Middle East, where our target people are, Islamic terrorism and fundamentalism is at rise. It is risky and life-threatening to even hold a Bible in your hands. The fundamentalist Islamic militant groups are even targeting and threatening ministries, like ours, that are producing digital material that disciples Muslims virtually.

What we noticed that people are not drawn to our message immediately. We grab their attention with excellent technology and with excellent creativity in the presentation we produce. That is our goal. We want to reach, preach, and teach, and if we can do that, we will have a chance to have even an ever-greater impact doing what we already do in cultures that desperately need Jesus.

The staff at Arabic Lutheran Ministry gives God all the glory for this. We recognize that none of these things could have taken place without the faithful friends who support Arabic Lutheran Ministries with their prayer and giving. We are so deeply grateful for their partnership. The impact we are making together in hundreds of millions of lives is truly astounding and those who support ALM with their prayer and giving play a vital role in making all this possible.

In Him,
Executive Director,
Rev. Dr. Abjar Bahkou

Afghanistan Under the Rule of Taliban



On Sunday August 15, 2021, Taliban fighters took control of Kabul the capital city of Afghanistan. Since NATO forces took control of Afghanistan in 2001 the people experiences a relatively some measure of religious freedom. During these 20 years we witnessed the conversion of the first generation of Afghan Christians. That measure of freedom was totally eliminated when Taliban took over the country again.

As early as July of 2021 the Taliban announced that under their Islamic rule, Christians must reconvert to Islam, leave the country, or be killed. Afghanistan was already a very dangerous place for Christian and now it has become a country where each believer must immediately choose between their faith and their life.

History of Christianity in Afghanistan

It is believed that there was first a Christian presence in Afghanistan in the second century, but the church there was extinguished by the rise of Islam and its advance in the region. The only known church building of the last several decades was demolished by Afghan soldiers in 1973. The congregation continued to meet elsewhere until 2010 but their fate is from that point unknown. A chapel existed at the Italian embassy in Kabul, but Italy now plans to move the embassy to Qatar.

The Taliban emerged out of the chaos that followed the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989. The mujahideen (Jihadi Fighters) were the heart of the anti-Soviet resistance, strengthened by arms and cash funneled through Pakistan by Saudi Arabia and the U.S. It was the Mujahideen commander, Mullah Mohammad Omar, who formed the Taliban, which, with the capture of Kabul in 1996, sealed their control of Afghanistan itself.

The capture of Kabul indicates a return to the strict enforcement of Sharia Law which characterized Taliban rule from 1996 until the U.S. led invasion of 2001. The Taliban confirmed that this was their intention in the months before retaking control of the country. When a new government was announced on September 7, Mawlawi Hibatullah Akhundzada, who is the leader of Taliban announced that “in the future, all matters of governance and life in Afghanistan will be regarded by the laws of the holy Sharia”

What Does That Mean?

Islam is the only world religion that officially prescribes a range of severe punishments for its followers who choose to leave their faith. All four schools of law in Sunni Islam (the Hanafi, Maliki, Sahafi's and Hanbali) and the main Shia school Jafari considered legally to issue a death sentence for apostasy. (For more information on Sharia Law read my book, *Shining the Light of Gospel on the Quran, Understanding and Engaging Muslims*, Chapter 2).

Taliban follows the strict school of Hanafi. This Law school specifies death only for adult sane male apostates from Islam. However, the Taliban's track record of an ultra-strict interpretation of sharia means it is very likely they will kill all apostates both men and women and probably their children too.

Arabic Lutheran Ministries Partnership with Lutheran Congregations To Support and Minister to Arab and Afghan Refugees

Saint Louis area is expected to have over 2000 Afghan refugees and another 2000 Arab refugees. Arabic Lutheran Ministries is partnering with various Lutheran Congregations and mission agencies to reach out to Arab and Afghan refugees. Please prayerfully consider supporting our mission.

Immediate help on arrival for Afghani Refugee families:

- Welcome packages with items of basic human needs
- Family Care (mentoring a New American Family through one or more families from Churches)
- Food assistance (buying of gift cards to ethnic grocery shops)
- Gift cards to Kitchen utensils store, Walmart, transportation cards (bus, uber etc.),
- Rent assistance
- Driver's Ed. & ESL
- Household Furnishing
- Trauma Counselling
- Life skills activity for fellowship & learning (Sewing, cooking, etc.)

What Arabic Lutheran Ministry would love to do to help and serve our New Arab and Afghani neighbors:

- Work with the International Institute to provide welcome baskets addressing immediate basic needs
- Connect interested families and individuals through Lutheran congregations to Afghani refugee families for a couple of months of support and mentoring, with LAM managing the activity and providing training and support
- Help with driving education training and ESL education
- Help with health screenings and doctor's appointment needs
- Help with pressing needs assistance (rent, utility bills, household needs etc.)

Needs of ALM to serve and bless Arab and Afghani Refugee families:

- Prayer support and help with volunteers for service and outreach among Arabs and Afghanis
- Raise funds to help actualize service and ministry among Arabs and Afghani refugees in St. Louis
- Rev. Bahkou is facilitating our ministry to Arabic speaking refugees. The need is to hire an Afghani ministry facilitator/interpreter.
- Hiring an Intern to help with serving the Afghani refugee outreach needs.
- Funds to support emergency financial requests from Arabic and Afghani refugee friends (utility bills, rent assistance etc.)
- Help with Family Care (mentoring) activity for a couple of months at least (interested church families and individuals)
- Housing assistance (in discussion with various Lutheran provider agencies)



Rev. Dr. Bahkou Helping Kurdish Refugee Family from Syria

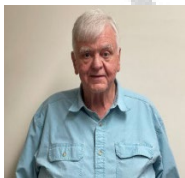
Our Ministry Team



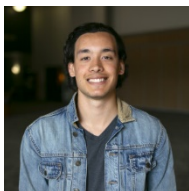
Rev. Dr. Bahkou is an ordained LCMS Pastor. Dr. Bahkou currently teaches at Concordia Seminary as Associate Professor of Practical Theology and Mission. He has been doing mission among Arabs and Muslims, planting LCMS Arabic speaking churches for the last 17 years. Dr. Bahkou is our founder and Executive Director of Arabic Lutheran Ministries. For more information about Dr. Bahkou See <https://www.csl.edu/directory/abjar-bahkou/>.



Rev. Dr. John Loum is our vice-president. An ordained LCMS pastor. A former Muslim from Gambia and a long-time missionary to Muslims in Africa, Europe, and America. Dr. Loum holds a Doctorate in Islamic Studies from Oxford University, England. He worked at Concordia Seminary as the Director of Ethnic Immigrant Institute of Theology until he retired in 2021. Currently Dr. Loum works as a consultant for many mission agencies around the world.



Ken Payne is the Treasurer of Arabic Lutheran Ministries. He is retired AT&T engineer. He also worked for Maritz for 13 years as a statistical and financial analyst. He has earned a B.S. B.A. and a M.B.A. Ken has taught Bible Study at Concordia – Kirkwood and served on Church Council and Chaired the Adult Nurture Board and the Outreach Board. He has served as an officer of a \$90 million Credit Union. Ken has also served as an officer of Christian Outreach to Muslims Everywhere (COME). A trained Stephen Minister. He currently serves as the President of Emmaus Luther Church (a mission church) in St. Louis.



Brandon Boos is a student at the Specific Ministry Program (SMP) at Concordia Seminary Saint Louis. He is preparing for his ordination as LCMS pastor. He is the mission coordinator at Faith Lutheran Church in Oakville MO. Brandon is our secretary and media and mission coordinator.



Financial Accounting of the Mission

Financial Oversight will be Conducted by the Board of Directors
Lutheran Arabic Ministries.

Name of Contact Person(s)

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Ken Payne, Treasurer

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