



Dar Manhal Al Hayat... A Growing Ministry

By Grace Abu Daher

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Last April, the shipping and distribution of Dar Manhal Al Hayat’s Christian resources in Iraq was delayed. Our cargo driver was threatened by terrorists. If he attempted to continue his journey and cross the Iraqi border, they would kill him.

No doubt you are constantly updated on the news in the Middle East. It is obvious that the region is in a state of turmoil and political insecurity. However, as a ministry, this is not our concern. We fully believe that, despite the challenges, God is in control—and He has a purpose for us.

Our vision

The Arab World today is an enormously large harvest field. Among a population of more than 406 million Arabs, only about 5 percent are professed Christians. Yet the good news is that God is at work in this part of the world, graciously calling diverse Christian ministries to complement church planting processes with evangelism, discipleship and leadership development. Dar Manhal Al Hayat (DMAH), a Lebanese Christian publishing house formerly known as Baptist Publications, seeks to make transformational Christian resources in the Arabic language accessible to the Arab World. Our name means “source of life,” and that is what we hope to bring to all who are desperately seeking a sense of peace,

who do not know that the Prince of Peace is at hand in the person of Jesus Christ.

God’s grace

What happened with our driver stuck at the border with a truck full of life-giving books? The shipping and distribution of our resources was delayed, but God continues to be glorified.

Since January 2004, with the removal of the blockade on Iraq and the establishment of the first Baptist church in Baghdad, our publishing house initiated work in Iraq, with the objective of empowering church ministry there.

In the years since then, DMAH has held two or three exhibitions each year in the cities of Erbil and Baghdad. The book fairs have been fruitful. People of all religious backgrounds have been eager to buy and read the limited materials we are able to ship.

Around 50,000 Iraqi children (in Baghdad and Northern Iraq) have received their own copy of the *Picture Bible*. In 2004 and 2005, through partnership with Cook International and others, we distributed this title in schools, churches and parachurch organizations. An Iraqi Sunday school teacher shared, “We teach about the Bible, but the children do not have Bibles in hand ... I was telling my Sunday school class that the Bible is the Good News; and the good

news to you is that today you're going to each have a *Picture Bible* of your very own!"

In 2005, the *Faith & Life* Sunday school curriculum, which is published by DMAH, was also distributed to the churches. A Lebanese team went to Iraq to train the Sunday school teachers to use it efficiently. Last year, an Iraqi pastor was kidnapped and murdered as he was distributing *Picture Bibles* and related literature in Mosul.

Security conditions are worsening, but we look for ways to continue our ministry to encourage Christians in this long-isolated country. Kindly keep us and all our partners in your prayers!

More ministry

DMAH's vision extends beyond Lebanon to various countries such as Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Iraq and Sudan.

In Sudan, we started the distribution of *Picture Bibles* (24,000 copies) and the curriculum (30,000 copies) in 2004. The feedback we received and still receive from children and teachers is rewarding! "The number of children attending Sunday school has doubled since we've started using the curriculum," said a Sudanese pastor in Omdurman. Children even take the material home to share with their parents.

While DMAH focuses on literature, in 2006 it conducted relief projects that included the distribution of food supplements, clothes and blankets to impoverished Sudanese families.

Multi-faceted ministry is not new to Dar Manhal Al Hayat. In June 2006, when missiles and bombs fell on Beirut suburbs, editorial work briefly came to a halt while DMAH staff distributed 7,150 Christian books to those most affected by the bombings and ministered to refugee families.

Light casting away shadows

At a time where Christians are fleeing from Lebanon and people are afraid for the country's economic, political, and social future, DMAH has opened a new bookshop. The Gateway Bookshop's strategic location in the heart of Beirut makes our resources accessible to a large population. There are three other evangelical bookstores and together we serve a population of about 2 million people in this city.

Launched on December 15, 2007, The Gateway Bookshop seeks to drive away shadows—shadows of fear, hatred, despair, hunger—with the only Light powerful enough to do so: Jesus Christ! The bookshop offers a large range of English and Arabic books that cover family issues, women, youth, children, Christian living, leadership, discipleship, theology, Bible study and more. It also sells CDs and tapes of Arab and Western Christian music, gift items and souvenirs.

Moving forward

DMAH has three full-time workers at the bookshop; seven others work in the publishing ministry. In the next five years, God willing, we will publish more than 50 books, with an average print run of 3,000 copies per book.

In response to the market needs and the high demand for spiritual books among church leaders, pastors and individuals, we are expanding and diversifying our translation efforts and developing local tracts to cover needed topics and resources in our region.

Many indigenous writers are contributing to enrich our library. Christian Arabic writers are aware of our region's needs, culture, traditions, beliefs and practices, as they live and work among us; they are able to speak and write the same language as that of our readers.

Most of our resources are freely distributed or sold at subsidized rates.

Through DMAH's networks and annual local book exhibitions, our resources reach various denominations in Lebanon and the Middle East (Baptists, Presbyterians, Brethren, Pentecostal, Alliance, Catholic, Orthodox, etc.). The exhibitions are good opportunities to spread the Word of God to many people and build new relationships with them.

In attempt to enhance our distribution processes and channels, in the next two years we aim to develop an online E-bookstore designed exclusively for Arabic Christian literature. This will be a joint partnership between DMAH and other Christian publishing houses in the Middle East.

God put us here for a purpose: to be salt and light in our service to Him, and serve the growing Arab church. We want to reach not only the Arabs in our region, but all

Arabs worldwide, and ask for your prayers as we move forward.

Grace Abu Daher is the External Relations Coordinator for Dar Manhal Al Hayat.

Dar Manhal Al Hayat (<http://www.dar-manhal-alhayat.com/>), in Beirut, Lebanon, seeks to make transformational Christian resources in the Arabic language accessible to the Arab World. Founded in 1953, it is now owned by the (LSESD) [[Lebanese Society for Educational and Social Development](#)], and partners with [Middle East Bible Outreach](#).

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