

The Ministry



Arab Christians
Proclaiming the Gospel
through video

Version February 2016

Introduction

There are millions of Christians in the Arab World; they are a minority amongst the more than 300 million Arab Muslims. Many of these Arab Christians experience discrimination – even persecution – by the Muslims in their homelands. These brothers and sisters in Christ need our encouragement to hold on to the faith, and also in their efforts to witness to our Lord and Savior in their hostile environment.

Across the Arab world, many Muslims are more open to the Gospel of Christ than ever before. Today, more Muslims are coming to faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord than at any other time in history. One major cause for this is that educational levels in the Arab World have increased at a rapid pace over the past 50 years. Also, through satellite television and the Internet, Muslims are now able to learn about the Christian faith without being hampered by the censorship of their mosques and governments. An increasing number of Muslims in the Middle East and North Africa are unhappy about the violent implementation of Islam (among others, by IS), and are considering other options, such as atheism or Christianity.

This document is an introduction to Arab Vision and its evangelistic work in the Arab World since its inception in 1997. Our Mission Statement and our Vision Statement explain our work most succinctly; in this Ministry document, we unpack those statements.

Vision Statement

We envision an Arab World with, in each People Group, an increasing number of vibrant Churches that play a strategic public role in shaping their societies in accordance with the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Mission Statement

Arab Vision is a community of Christians committed to changing individuals and societies through the Gospel of Jesus Christ, by producing and distributing effective Christian video programs, using appropriate media for various target audiences in the languages of the peoples of the Arab World.

Arab Vision aims to fulfil its vision and mission by:

1. **Producing** video programs for and in the Arab World that proclaim the Gospel and its relevance to all aspects of life.

The video programs aim to:

Strengthen the local churches (the Church)

Christian video programs are programs that strengthen the (identity of the) Church in the Arab World. These programs include testimonies, bible-studies, Christian music videos, apologetics, talkshows on Christian lifestyle, marriage and family, raising children, presenting Christian history of the Middle East/ North Africa, etc.

Reach Muslims

Christian video programs are programs that present Jesus Christ and his Church clearly to Muslims in a non-confrontational manner, with an ethos of love and friendliness.

Transform society

Christian video programs are programs that present the transformational power of the Gospel in all aspects of life, and includes human rights issues (the position of women, the practice of FGM, standing up for the rights of physically and mentally challenged people, (religious) minorities rights, what to think of domestic violence and incest, how to advocate social justice, etcetera). Arab Vision clearly pursues to open up discussion in taboo areas.

The video programs are effective because their content is focused on the intended audiences, contextual, concrete, combined with their high technical quality. They are also effective because Arab Vision seeks to always produce distinct video programs; we want to produce programs that others don't, and we don't want to repeat ourselves.

2. **Distributing** these programs in the Arab World through satellite broadcast, on the Internet (making optimal use of the social media), through local, regional and national television, and on DVD.
3. **Organizing audience follow-up** - using email, mobile telephone, social media (Facebook), and personal contacts.

Arab Vision seeks to cooperate, and partner with like-minded organizations to strengthen each other's ministries, and to express unity and joint efforts to realize God's Kingdom.

Arab Christians Proclaiming the Gospel through Video - Why?

Some of the first Christian Churches were established in the Arab World. Nowadays, there are still millions of Christians in the Middle East and North Africa but they have become a minority amongst the more than 300 million Arabs.

Many Arab Christians desire to heed the call of Christ to proclaim the Gospel and live its consequences. As the Word of God speaks to the whole person and to all mankind, many Arab Christians are eager to teach and live this Word of God in its entirety, in their individual lives, in the life of the church, and in all society.

At least half of all Arabic-speaking people is functionally illiterate. In cultures where literacy is low and reading is not common, video is an excellent educational tool.

Almost every Arab family has a television, even though many are extremely poor, and many of them have access to satellite; satellite broadcasts enable millions of people throughout the whole Arab World to watch Christian programs.

Vast numbers of people in the Arab World have access to fast internet as well. Arab Vision uses YouTube, Facebook, and websites as outlets for the video programs as well. These new media are also excellent to be used for audience follow-up.

The Distinctiveness of Arab Vision

Throughout the past years since Arab Vision started its ministry in 1997, many have recognised the value of using video programs as a tool for the proclamation of the Gospel to the Arabs. Three factors make Arab Vision's contribution distinctive - *its identity, its program content, and its approach to producing.*

Identity and Ethos

Arab Vision is a Christian organization aiming to serve all Churches of the Middle East, the Arabian Peninsula and North Africa. Arab Vision accepts the *Lausanne Covenant* and the *Manila Manifesto* as well as the *Grand Rapids Consultation on Evangelism and Social Responsibility* as good descriptions of its Christian commitment. The ethos of Arab Vision and its programming are well described by the *Ethical Standards of the Fellowship of European Broadcasters (FEB)* and by the *Christian Principles of Communication of the World Association for Christian Communication (WACC)*.

Program Content

Arab Vision is committed to supporting Christians in the Arab World, both in their spiritual journey and in their participation in transforming society. It therefore produces educational videos designed to develop mature disciples of Jesus Christ. It tries to do so by bearing witness to the one body of Christ and not to any specific denomination.

In its productions Arab Vision stresses God's transforming power in all areas of human life. The Gospel addresses the whole person and all people. An integral part of discipleship to Christ is a vision for a just society. This involves a commitment to human rights, to the poor, to minorities, to women, to refugees, to the powerless, and to those with special needs. In its productions Arab Vision supports the struggle of these people for a dignified life. Part of that dignity is the right people have to be approached in their own spoken language.

Videos can play an important role in prompting Muslims and Christians in the Middle East, the Arab Gulf and North Africa to question the many misunderstandings that have accumulated over centuries of conflict. As the Gospel is for all people, Arab Vision produces culturally sensitive, thought-provoking videos to help all Arab people to better understand and respond to the Christian message. Arab Vision's experience is that there is openness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ amongst people of all backgrounds in the Arab World.

Approach to Producing

Arab Vision consists mainly of Arab Christians. Arab Vision believes that the method of its communication cannot be separated from the content of its message. We cannot communicate the crucified Lord in a crusading manner.

Arab Vision recognises the distressing social and political forces that have often shaped the region and its people's perceptions. That is another reason why the ministry seeks to avoid a culturally superior, crusading approach.

Among other things this means the avoidance of a style of operating which emphasises the role of the western expert as the dispenser of knowledge and the Arab national as the recipient.

Arab Vision affirms its commitment to partnership and servanthood in its approach both to the strengthening of the Church in the region and in its approach to those outside the Church.

An important aspect of Arab Vision's partnership with the Churches of the Arab World is to stand beside them in creating alternative venues for communication.

Arab Vision's programs are aimed at helping people to think for themselves and to take action for the betterment of their own lives. This result can only be achieved through participatory communication. Especially when media are used in the context of the local community, they seem to be the best vehicle for true communication. This entails also a choice for the usage of the mother tongue or dialect of that local community.

As much as possible, Arab Vision seeks to travel light, emphasising the development of creative, indigenous programming over the acquisition of hardware or facilities. The Arab World does not lack studios, but it lacks quality Christian productions. Arab Vision therefore prefers to use existing facilities to produce its programs and only looks for organisational growth in so far as this helps the ministry's purpose.

Organisational Structure & Operation

International Office, Production House, and Support Offices

The International Office of Arab Vision is a virtual office; staff is based in and outside the Arab World. Most of Arab Vision's video productions are done through its production house, based in the Arab World. The core group of the production house is relatively small; for the various productions we work with a number of freelancers. For productions in specific languages like those in North Africa, we work mainly with freelancers.

Arab Vision Trust Fund is registered as a charity in Cyprus.

Arab Vision has support offices in the USA where it is recognized as a 501(c)3 organization, in the UK, where it is registered as a charity in England and Wales (no 1154993) and in The Netherlands where it has a charity status as well. The directors

of these supporting offices are ex-officio members of the International Board with no voting rights.

The International office, the production house(s), and the Support Offices are spiritually and contractually linked together under the board for the sole purpose of achieving the stated goals and objectives of Arab Vision.

The Board of Arab Vision

The Board of Arab Vision is made up of volunteers who have set aside their personal interests, giving their time and carrying out their duties for no payment. Arab Vision benefits from the objectivity that the Board brings as well as from the spirituality, experience and skills of its members.

The Board is composed of a minimum of five members and a maximum of nine. All Board members have full voting rights and sit on the Board for three-year terms. Members are entitled to sit on the Board for two consecutive terms but must then step back for at least one year. The International Director attends the Board meetings ex-officio and has no right to vote. The Board meets twice a year.

The Arab Vision Board consists of men and women representing different churches, nationalities, organisations, and trusts. The majority of Board members are Arabs. More information about the Board and its members can be obtained from the office of Arab Vision.

In general terms the Board's duty is to ensure that Arab Vision has a clear direction and purpose and a sense of urgency to get on with the work it was established to do. The Board sets objectives, establishes priorities, and safeguards the assets, ensuring that they are used effectively and exclusively to fulfil the mission of Arab Vision.

Day-to-day operations are delegated to the International Director who keeps in close touch with the Managing Director(s) of the Media Organisation(s) and the Director(s) of the International Office and of the National Support Offices.

The Board remains ultimately responsible for ensuring that Arab Vision is well managed and operates within agreed policies, the law and its budget.

Arab Vision Staff

For legal reasons the 'Arab Vision Trust Fund' is registered in Cyprus, but Arab Vision works in the Arab World, and the staff of its Media Organizations is mainly based in Arab countries.

Recruitment

Arab Vision recruits its personnel from amongst Arab Christians who already work in the media industry in the Middle East and North Africa.

If for certain positions no suitable Arabs can be found, Arab Vision can employ people from other nationalities. These non-Arabs will usually be seconded to Arab

Vision by one of the sending agencies with which it enjoys warm relationships. Contracts with these non-Arabs always have a temporary character.

Though all personnel of Arab Vision have contracts spelling out the rights and obligations of the parties, Arab Vision aims to not only be a task-oriented company but also a community of people. These people co-operate in their mutual ministry with love and concern. Arab Vision offers a framework that allows flexibility and space for personal development.

Qualifications

In general people will only be employed if they have the exact qualifications needed for the job. Where an Arab with good potential for a role within the ministry is identified, the required qualifications may initially be kept less strictly, with a view to further training being undertaken.

With regard to potential non-Arab personnel, qualifications as laid out in each job description are strictly adhered to. Arab Vision does not train non-Arab personnel and it will not accept non-Arab personnel that are not absolutely needed and suitable for the job.

Appointments and Accountability

Appointment of the International Director (ID) is made directly by the Board of Arab Vision. The ID, with the consent of the Board of Arab Vision appoints the Managing Director(s) of the Media Organisation(s) and the Directors of the International Office. These Managing Directors and Directors, with the consent of the ID, appoint their own staff members. All other appointments are made according to the accountability structure given in the Organisation Charts of the MO(s) and the relevant job descriptions. Accountability of staff members is clearly defined in their job description and contract.

Productions

Both the ID and the Managing Director(s) of the Media Organisation(s) can initiate Arab Vision's productions and co-productions. MD(s) propose new productions to the ID. Arab Vision's choice of productions occurs in close conjunction to the areas of need in the churches of the Arab World, and in Arab society as a whole.

Sometimes new productions are initiated at the request of organisations who express an interest in a certain theme or topic. Thus Arab Vision produces programs of many different styles and genres including documentaries, dramas, educational programs, music videos, and talk shows.

Distribution

The focus of Arab Vision's productions is the Middle East, The Arab Gulf, and North Africa. However, Arab Vision's concern is not just to produce videos but to give as

many people as possible the opportunity to respond to the call of Jesus Christ to follow Him. For this reason Arab Vision distributes its products throughout the globe wherever there is obvious need. This is achieved through a network of broadcasters who also provide feedback and advise on future productions.

Distribution is not only organized through these TV broadcasters, but through the Internet as well. YouTube, Facebook and other *new media* are used to distribute and 'broadcast' short clips as well as full programs, produced by Arab Vision.

Follow-up

The overall goal of Arab Vision's ministry is to extend the Kingdom of God. For this reason Arab Vision is vitally concerned that people respond to its productions and follow Christ as Savior and Lord, both in their beliefs and their behaviour.

Using social media, mobile phones and email, our follow-up team members are ready to offer a listening ear to those who need it, respond to viewers' questions, pray with them and even provide material help. Many viewers call to share their testimonies, others the emptiness of their lives. Often they can be referred to local Christian communities. Our team is based in the Middle East and can connect enquirers to other follow-up networks in the region

Facilities

Arab Vision is a producer of programs, and does not own production facilities (studio) or a television station. If equipment is acquired the criterion is that of appropriateness.

Publications

While Arab Vision is a community of Christians in the Arab World, it also rejoices in having many supportive friends internationally. These friends render support by prayer, advice, and finances.

Organizations and individuals who undertake to pray regularly will receive prayer and newsletters by e-mail, and by print newsletters. These letters and updates contain information on developments in the Arab World, on our video productions and on general issues that affect Arab Vision.

Organizations or individuals who participate financially in one or more productions are updated regularly on the status of these productions, new productions, audience response, financial issues, and personnel matters. These reports are detailed and give a clear insight into the progress and setbacks of the production. We want to 'walk in the light', as this is the best basis for a long lasting relationship between Arab Vision and its international partners.

Funding

As most Christians in the Middle East, the Arab Gulf and North Africa do not have the financial means to fund video productions, Arab Vision depends on partnership with organisations in Europe, North America, and Asia for its funding.

Arab Vision's productions are usually funded as one-off projects. Its day-to-day operating expenses are principally funded from the various productions it undertakes through direct charges but it also seeks undesignated funds toward its support.

While Arab Vision raises most of its funds, it does also enter into commercial video production in order to subsidize its Christian productions. But such activity is not its primary aim and does not take priority over the ministry's stated objectives.

How to become a partner with Arab Vision

Arab Vision is looking for international partners who want to join their community and help it fulfil its *Mission Statement* in the manner described in this document.

As a Christian community Arab Vision likes to think of partnership in terms of participation in prayer, advice, friendship, and financial support.

Organizations or individuals desiring partnership with Arab Vision are invited to write to the e-mail address contact@arabvision.org, for more information and in order to be put on the mailing list.

Financial Contributions

Financial contributions can be sent directly to the bank accounts of Arab Vision in the USA, the UK, and The Netherlands. Arab Vision also has financial representatives in other countries, like Canada, New Zealand, and Australia.

Partners sending money to any of these accounts are in all cases kindly requested to confirm this payment by mail or e-mail to the Arab Vision office.

In the USA

Arab Vision Inc. Is registered as a 501(c)3 organization.

You can send your donation direct to our bank:

Bank: Bank of America

Address: 11868 Preston Rd, Dallas, TX 75230

Federal EID: 48-1270313

Account No: 004782094990

Routing No: 111000025 (paper & electronic) 026009593 (wires)

Swift Code: BOFAUS3N (for sending U.S. dollars) BOFAUS6S (for sending foreign currency)

Or you can send checks to our American office.

Arab Vision Inc
1101 S. Broadway St., #120
Carrollton, Texas 75006

In the United Kingdom

Arab Vision is a registered charity (no. 1154993).

You can send your gift direct to our bank:

Bank: Lloyds Bank Plc
Account: Arab Vision
Sort code: 30-97-24
Account no: 49415760

Alternatively, cheques can be sent to:

Arab Vision
23 Mill Lane
Saffron Walden
Essex CB10 2AS

In The Netherlands

Arab Vision is a registered charity with an ANBI status.

You can send your donation direct to our bank:

ING bank account number (IBAN): NL52INGB0005037361

BIC bank: INGBNL2A

Beneficiary: Stichting Arab Vision, P.O. Box 70057, 9704 AB, Groningen, The Netherlands

In Canada, Australia and New Zealand

Cheques can be sent to Interserve with a cover letter indicating that the money is meant for Arab Vision.

Interserve

10 Huntingdale Blvd
Scarborough, ON
M1W 2S5
Canada

Interserve

PO Box 231
Bayswater
Victoria 3153
Australia

Interserve

PO Box 10244
Dominion Rd
Auckland 1446
New Zealand