



CANADA

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LANGHAM LEADERS IN LEBANON

The Church in Lebanon is a prophetic presence in the midst of the troubles that have plagued this country in recent history. A cascading crisis has exposed years of corruption and political malfunction and has led to one of the most drastic peacetime economic collapses in recorded history, compounded by the terrible explosion in Beirut harbour in August 2020, killing at least 218, and leaving 300,000 homeless. But that is not the only story in Lebanon. Several Lebanese Langham Scholars have taken up God's call to leadership in this stricken nation.

Hikmat Kashouh studied at Arab Baptist Theological Seminary (ABTS) in Beirut, then at International Baptist Theological Seminary and, as a Langham Scholar, at Birmingham University in England. His doctoral research focusing on the earliest Arabic-language Gospel texts equipped him to engage with Muslim scholars in the region, once he returned as a professor (and formerly, also as Academic Dean) at ABTS. (Hikmat is profiled on Langham's video at vimeo.com/334719510.)

The academy's vital role is to equip the Church's leaders. Hikmat soon became the pastor of Resurrection Church Beirut (RCB). In 2008 RCB numbered 75 people. Today, some 4,000 people are divided into 39 spiritual families meeting in 11 separate venues, with a wide range of people from across the region. Some are Muslim-background believers from elsewhere in the region, seeking a country where they can freely practice their new faith. Many are Syrian refugees. Hikmat has launched a training movement to equip Syrian pastors. He has shared his insights in *Following Jesus In Turbulent Times: Disciple-Making In the Arab World*, a book published by Langham Literature.

How do you give spiritual support to people who have lived through so much, and who in many cases are perceived as political enemies? Hikmat recently told his story to *Christianity Today* magazine. "One

Sunday, I invited one of those Syrian leaders, he was a militant leader at the time who left Syria and came to Lebanon; he ran away." He describes the leader's story of a voice urging him to follow the light of a candle, which led him to their church. "So when he came to church and he loved our congregation, I invited him up on Sunday morning," says Hikmat, who then washed the man's feet on stage, before the congregation.

"God brought all the past memories and the stories and I started to cry. I learned an amazing lesson: when you bow down to serve your enemy, God comes down and heals your wounds, heals your past. I cried, my leaders cried, it was so transformational." Hikmat says he's learned "that before you go out to transform others, the Spirit of God transforms us and works in us in a transformational way in the world. So we are first transformed in order to go out and serve and invite others to be transformed by the power of love and the power of reconciliation."

Leaders need great wisdom to navigate Lebanon's complexities, and to counsel Christians trying to discern God's best for their lives, and make agonizing decisions about whether God is asking them to stay or go, in a context where everyone's life situation is unique and there are no easy answers. This decision has pressed on many Lebanese during previous crises. An estimated one million left during the 1975-1990 civil war. Still, all of ABTS's 35 staff remain in place in Lebanon.

How do you minister in such a world? Theologically prepared pastors, with hearts alive with Scriptural truth and spiritual passion, are making a difference, and Langham has prepared many of them.

Hikmat also points out that faulty teaching over the years, such as the Prosperity Gospel, has undermined the faith of many – causing them to leave Lebanon because they believe suffering is outside God's will,

or simply become disillusioned with Christianity. Among those who remain can be found many with a mature, holistic faith, immersed in the life of their community and open to the opportunity for Gospel proclamation that the crisis presents. For Hikmat, and those serving with him, the debate about whether Gospel proclamation includes help to Lebanon's neediest is meaningless:

"When you are with your friends, if you see them as your friends, not just potential converts, if you see them as part of your family, as part of your neighborhood, you don't even ask that question."

Hikmat is one of four Langham Scholars at ABTS. Emad Botros is the most recent to join, having finished his PhD at McMaster in Hamilton in 2021. Emad's teaching focuses on how to present the Gospel within a majority-Muslim cultural context. Emad is also working on ABTS's transition to more online theological education, to make theological education more affordable and accessible to students in the Middle East, and to address the pressures of the post-Covid world.

Emad teaches and counsels students struggling for meaning in the midst of the chaos. What does it mean to pray for shalom in such a context? He tells them that it begins by examining our own mission: does it truly line up with God's? Are we just selling false hope? Are we seeking first to examine our own sin and to know God's heart above all? Our ultimate hope is the Bible's promise that "righteousness will abide in the fruitful field. And the effect of righteousness will be peace," (Isaiah 32), the foundational hope of our lives and work, whether in this world or the new heaven and earth. In the meantime, Emad tells his students, "You are here to be trained and equipped to go back to your own country, joining God in his work of bringing peace, seeking and praying on behalf of your country towards this peace."

Lebanon is situated in the middle of one of the world's most volatile regions. God has given Langham an opportunity to help shape the leaders who in turn are shaping the Church's response. Thank you for your part in this Kingdom ministry.



Prayer for Ukraine

As the world's attention is on Ukraine, Christians all around the globe are praying that this dire situation find a peaceful resolution. Langham Partnership has many connections in Ukraine, with a strong network of Scholars, writers and pastors who call Ukraine home. It was a few short years ago in 2016 that the *Slavic Bible Commentary*, the first ever Russian-language commentary, was launched in Kyiv. At the time of the launch, Taras Dyatlik, who managed the project, said that the commentary was "a witness of unity in Christ between Ukrainian and Russian Christians around the Lord and His Word." We must also remember the many Russian Christians who at great personal cost are now proclaiming the Christian response to injustice and bloodshed. The

head of Russia's Evangelical Alliance has sent an open letter via the World Evangelical Alliance, lamenting the invasion of Ukraine.

Rev Tayo Arikawe, International Director of Langham Partnership, shared this prayer request with the Langham family. "The situation in Ukraine and with Russia continues to worsen and our prayers are very much needed. We want our brothers and sisters over there to be assured that our love, thoughts and prayers are with them at this difficult moment. May I encourage us all to continue in prayer. We need to ask God to intervene in the situation. We need to ask God to comfort those whose lives have been torn apart and to know His sustaining power and provision. We need to ask God to give wisdom to governments and world leaders to bring this to an end."

Announcing a new Middle East PhD

Langham Scholars has for some time been considering a Middle East and North Africa (MENA) regional PhD initiative, which would offer a research doctorate program with international credibility for students from the MENA schools which Langham works with: Arab Baptist Theological Seminary in Beirut, Lebanon; Bethlehem Bible College in the West Bank, Palestine; and Evangelical Theological Seminary in Cairo. The vision is to equip faculty from all evangelical colleges and seminaries in the MENA region. The program envisions work in areas such as Middle Eastern Christianity; contextually relevant Biblical studies; Islamic studies, and MENA cultures.

In 2021, there was significant progress toward this goal, with a proposed formal relationship with the Free University of Amsterdam (FUA). MENA scholars would study in the MENA region and, after year one,

would be registered as students with the Free University, thereafter supervised by a FUA advisor, in partnership with supervisors/readers from the MENA region, most of them Langham graduates. Students will be able to remain resident in MENA during most of their studies.

Langham Canada is thrilled that two of our supporters have recently made very generous gifts toward this vision. Langham Canada will be at the forefront of this initiative, which will serve to prepare pastors and leaders for the Church in this region, and to help equip MENA PhD's to write and to engage with global Christian leaders around the world. Langham Canada has established a designated fund toward this initiative. If you believe that God is directing you to be part of this vision, to His glory, please speak to our national director, who will be delighted to provide more information.

The Ripple Effect of Langham's Impact at the Napopo Bible Institute

The story of Emmanuel Kulukukumbo and the Napopo Bible Institute is one of courage and resilience, and helps to demonstrate Langham Partnership's impact in the lives of pastors and church leaders around the world.

In 2018, Emmanuel was appointed the new principal of Napopo Bible Institute, in northeastern DR Congo, arriving with knowledge and skills acquired during his training at a seminary with a significant Langham presence. Emmanuel completed his Masters level theological education at Université Shalom de Bunia, a seminary run by a consortium of five Congolese churches, with three Langham Scholars among its teachers, including the principal Dr Georges Atido. Its large library includes books given annually by Langham. The former seminary principal has published several books through HippoLivres, Langham's francophone African imprint.

Every year, for over 50 years, men and women like Emmanuel, trained at Shalom, have graduated to take up ministry throughout DR Congo. The Kingdom impact of the seminary is profound.



Emmanuel's challenge was particularly daunting, as he moved from the seminary classroom to modeling servant-leadership at Napopo, helping to strengthen it literally from the ground up, including making mud bricks with the students. Napopo has a difficult history, founded in the 1950's, but abandoned in 2008 after terrorist attacks. In 2014, the church which oversees the school decided to rebuild.

The most pressing need was for a new principal, who came from the region and was thus familiar with its culture and vernacular language. Emmanuel, trained by Langham scholars, was able to help bring new life and energy to the college,



confronted by so many challenges over the years.

Last year, tragedy struck again when the school burned down during the dry season, apparently due to brush fires. Some of the precious library books were salvaged, but many of the classrooms were lost. Again, led by Emmanuel, the teachers and students are rebuilding. Langham Literature has sent another gift of books, and it was a great joy for the school to witness their principal opening the boxes and examining these new books.



Rebuilding continues. This year enrolment is expected to exceed 60 men and women (up from only 27 when Emmanuel came to Napopo). The Christian Church is active in corners of the world like Napopo, known to relatively few, but well-known and dearly loved by God. Thank you for partnering with Langham to help places like Napopo Bible Institute carry on, to God's glory.



Meet Jorge and Gail Atiencia

Jorge is a Senior Advisor with Langham, and mentors the Regional Preaching team in Latin America. For many years, they were based in Bogotá, Colombia, but have recently relocated to Ecuador, Jorge's home country. Gail is originally from Calgary, and they met while Jorge was studying at Regent College, Vancouver. They were recently interviewed by Langham Preaching's Europe & Caribbean director Mark Meynell, about the role that John Stott has played in their lives and ministry. You can hear their conversation at uk.langham.org/the-stott-legacy-gail-and-jorge-atiencia/



Your impact last year

We give thanks for how Langham Canada supporters helped churches in the Majority World to be equipped for mission and to grow to maturity in Christ through the ministry of pastors and leaders who believe, teach and live by the Word of God.

Here is a snapshot of what was accomplished, with your help, in 2021.

84 students from 44 countries

pursuing theological studies were supported last year, including five studying in Canada.

19 scholars graduated

and are returning home to lead seminaries, launch salt and light ministries, and serve their nations for Christ, including two returning from Canada to Lebanon and Indonesia.

13,940 books were distributed

to Majority World pastors, students, and ministry partners in need of study materials.

22 indigenous publishers

were supported, to produce 55 titles, including publishers in Mongolia and Turkey directly supported by Langham Canada.

16,563 Bible-centred books

were supplied to

633 Majority World colleges across 80 countries

to help students grow and mature in Christ, including seminaries in Eastern Europe directly supported through Langham Canada.

204 preaching training seminars

were held, equipping **8,900+ pastors** and lay leaders in 54 countries, including in the Balkans, directly supported by Langham Canada.

1,147 preaching groups

of 7-10 pastors and leaders were shepherded, meeting regularly for ongoing training and mentoring.

As always, we are happy to answer any questions or meet with you via zoom or a phone call to bring you even more up to date on the work you help support through your prayers and financial gifts. Thank you for the difference you are making around the world

YOU CAN BE PART OF LANGHAM'S MISSION!



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Remember to email us at canada@langham.org to request a zoom meeting with Steven Van Dyck, executive director of Langham Canada and the outreach and mission team at your church.