



## April 2024 Challenging Misconceptions

It's often the first question we hear when someone learns that we live and minister in the Middle East. Close friends we have known for many years and others we have recently met will furrow their brows with genuine concern and ask, "Do you feel safe living there?"

We understand why people pose the question. Certain places in the Middle East (Gaza, Yemen, Syria, sections of Iran and Iraq) are fraught with danger, and safety should never be presumed. But this is simply not the case in much of the Arab world.

In the Kingdom of Bahrain, for example, violent crime is extremely rare and gun violence is nonexistent. People are generally kind, hospitable, and gracious. Bahrainis love their families, pursue faith with sincerity, and welcome visitors and foreign residents warmly.

Another aspect of Bahrain people find surprising is religious tolerance. Though Bahrain is a Muslim country, all people are allowed to practice their faith freely. This is true not only for Christians, but also Jews, Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, and various other faith traditions.

Therefore, we are not forced like some who fear persecution to go underground for worship or Bible study. To the contrary, our seven member congregations gather with more than 5,000 believers and spiritual seekers each weekend to lift high the name of Jesus! Yes, you heard that correctly—in a part of the world where many believe the proclamation of the gospel is both dangerous and illegal, the English Language Congregation of the National Evangelical Church of Bahrain is planning for and praying about planting churches! Where churches in the West seem more often to struggle with decreasing membership, the ELC is blessed to set up additional chairs each service to accommodate all who wish to worship with us! Our Easter Sunrise Service this March needed to be held outdoors in our church parking lot because we did not have enough space indoors to hold everyone!



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We invite you to join us in sharing the wonderful story of the work God is doing in Bahrain! Please join us in challenging misconceptions about this part of the world and praying with us for our next church-planting pastor(s).

The fields in Bahrain and throughout the Middle East are 'white unto harvest.' Yet misconceptions about the Middle East keep many from even considering a season of service in this part of the world. Your prayers and your sharing can do much to alter misconceptions and encourage people to look at the Middle East as a place where God's Spirit is active and lives, communities, and entire nations are being transformed!

With appreciation for your partnership in the work of the gospel,

Pastor Blaine and Kathy Newhouse  
RCA Global Mission  
Kingdom of Bahrain

*RCA Global Mission does not receive denominational assessments or covenant shares. We depend on the faithful generosity of churches and individuals.*