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MINISTRY Magazine

PUBLISHED BY

Great Commission Media Ministries

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PRINTED BY

Concord Printers 36 Cesar Chavex St St. Paul, MN 55107

GCMM MAILING ADDRESS

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www.gcmediaministries.org

CHARITY
REGISTRATION E.I.N.
81-3853764



Persevering Power In Life's Storms!

I grew up in an immigrant family on the west coast of Canada. My father was a commercial salmon fisherman.

He was professionally equipped with a stormproof fishing vessel for the Pacific Ocean, where back in the day storms often caught fishermen off guard without warning.

An anchor secures a vessel in a storm. It safeguards a vessel from aimlessly drifting about by the wind, being beached or shipwrecked. We had no business to be out at sea without an anchor.

The Apostle Paul knew what it meant to be caught in a storm, leading to distress at sea and to be shipwrecked. For this reason, he knew we need an anchor for our life.

He urges us to hold onto hope, "... as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure." Heb 6:19.

For as long as men have sailed the seas, an anchor has been a symbol of strength and security.

Ukraine war

Ukraine is fighting a fateful war. War is about more than just tanks, planes, rockets and explosives.

In war, there are direct 'hits' to a person's soul. These hits can be soul-destroying.

This happens with news of their loved ones, a father, son, husband, a family member or friend being wounded, have died or their home having been destroyed.

Millions of people in Ukraine have suddenly become refugees. Life is in shambles.

Everything is gone. Dreams for the future have all but dissipated. Wounds are deep and are plunging their souls into hopelessness and despair.

Without an anchor in life's storms, a person falls prey to the elements.

An anchor is needed because 'Life' is invaluable, fragile and easily broken. An anchor helps withstand the challenges of life.

The anchor in one's life has to be stronger than the greatest trial.

Our anchor cannot be another person, our retirement savings plan, employment achievements, our position in life or our health.

We can lose all these.

Seafarer wisdom: "Do not trust another floating object on the sea or a sailor in another boat. Don't even trust your own sails. A storm can take everything with it. When a storm strikes, trust only God and His promises."

Paul writes: "We have put our hope in the living God." 1 Tim. 4:10

Unwavering promises

Norms in life that we have trusted, crumble very quickly. Storms brew among family members, friends, schools, places of employment...

This begs the question: Is anything permanent? Lasting? What can be trusted?

Even heroes of the faith faced storms, challenges and adversity.

In Hebrews, Chapter 11, heroes of the faith were united by one thing, God's promises! They built their lives on the promises of God.

Fulfiller of promises

God is not only a giver of promises—He also fulfills His promises. There are no exceptions to this.

God's promises are like the forests in the Rocky Mountains. They are abundant, strong and evergreen.

God's promises never cease, for God is unchanging. (Mal. 3:6) That which He promises, He also fulfills.

Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the



Father...who does not change like shifting shadows. (James 1:17) God does not exaggerate, manipulate, deceive or cajole.

In all stages of our lives

His promises can be trusted in all stages of life!

The million-dollar question is not, does God keep His promises.

The big question is do we live our lives rooted in the promises of God?

When we live rooted in His promises, we will not falter in the storms of life...not within our families, society, school or at work.

I am reminded of an old Finnish hymn:

"That which the Lord promises, He fulfills, and His word will never fail...

The Lord's word is unwavering, it's mightier than heaven and earth.

If only I believe, I can experience this: He will never fail me."

Jesus said: "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away." Luke 21:33.

Storm winds may continue to blow. Heavy rains are still a reality. But at the end of the journey, you are still standing firm, because you are standing on the promises of God!

A guide for the soul

For this reason, GCMM has delivered millions of Ukrainian refugees a book called, "The Journey Home".

The promises in the Word of God, are the anchor that gives us endurance to live through all of life's storms.

Blessings, Hannu Haukka



From Dave **Ogren US Missions** Director

A Word About Praise

I recently read a handwritten note that came along with a donation for wood-burning stoves that moved me and caused me to involuntarily say 'Praise the Lord!' This couple shared with us that they made a family decision to forego their Christmas gifts for one another and redirect all their money towards helping families in Ukraine.

Christians have known for centuries that the sacrificial giving of our financial resources towards the kingdom of God, no matter the amount, is an act of praise and its product for the worshipper is joy. Why wouldn't they want to teach that to their children?

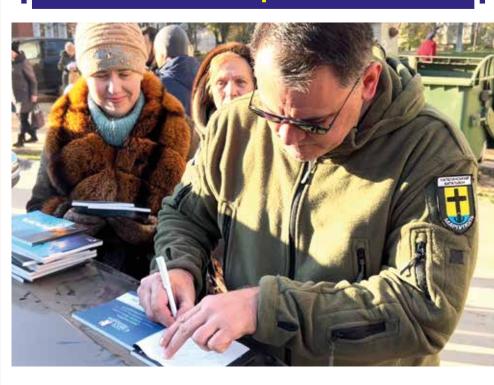
Then I got another one. Just last week we opened an envelope with five separate checks in it. One from the mother and father of the family and four separate checks from their 23, 22, 21 and 18-year-old children. As you read this article, is your heart beginning to say, 'Praise the Lord'? Mine is, even as I write it.

This got me thinking about praise. Do I praise because I've been commanded to? Because God demands it? Well, it is true that He demands it, but even that demand is for my own good and it simply causes me to praise all the more!

What I have been learning recently is that the more I do it, the more I want to, and the more that I wish those around me would too, beginning with my children.

C.S. Lewis wrote:

(Continued on page 7)



Millions In Ukraine **Turn Toward God**

As the war in Ukraine persists, | 6,000 attending Kherson the city of Kherson has been one of the many cities of focus for GCMM humanitarian aid and evangelism. Prior to the Russian invasion. Kherson was a city of 300,000 residents.

Kherson was occupied by Russian troops for eight months and was finally liberated from Russian occupation in November 2022.

Three days after the withdrawal of Russian troops, the GCMM humanitarian aid team delivered aid as well as the evangelism book "The Journey Home" to residents of the city.

The Baptist church in Kherson hosted the team, where under the direction of Pastor Sergey Sinii the team participated in evangelism and aid work. War, as it so often does, has inspired residents to search for spiritual guidance and security for their souls.

Evangelical Church

In a short period of time church attendance has soared, with a database of about 6.000 attendees who are in almost daily contact with the church, and attend services. Many have made a commitment to faith.

Medically speaking, Pastor Sergey is suffering from terminal, inoperable cancer. At the beginning of the war, he made a decision to stay in Kherson even though pastors across all denominations were moving away with their families. "My days are limited. I decided that I would rather serve the people of this city as their shepherd than leave them without someone to care for their souls. If I die here with the others, I die, but I have done my duty and served in ministry to the very end," says Pastor Sergey. God has blessed the ministry in amazing ways, and Pastor Sergey continues to shepherd the people of the church even through accelerating hostilities.

"Before the beginning of the war, 3-4 new people would be seen in each of our services. But now in every service, there are hundreds of new people who have not attended before." Pastor Sergey's team has accumulated a database of almost 6,000 new attendees for ongoing service to the community at hand.

"These people are of course in need of bread, but they are also in need of 'the bread of life', spiritual and emotional support. The residents of this city are looking for hope and faith which are lacking in their lives. They are coming to church to hear the word of God, which is exactly what's needed in these dire times. This is clearly a time of revival, one which we have never seen before!"

Kharkiv Church filled with seekers

"This war started by Russia is a nightmare for us all yet at the same time, 'the dream' of every pastor, church leader, evangelist and layperson," says Pastor Pjotr, the bishop of Kharkiv region and the local leader of the evangelical church.

People are 'hungry' to hear about hope and comfort from the word of God.

When the war started a year ago, from over 1,000 attendees, only 180 remained. Most moved to West Ukraine. But now, there are over 800 new people, coming to services regularly and willingly receiving the word of God.

"This is clearly a time of revival in our city", declares Pastor Pjotr.

Hannu and Laura Haukka



Bishop and leader of the Kharkiv Region Evangelical Church, together with GCMM Hannu Haukka. More evangelism books are urgently needed.

More Evangelism Books Urgently Needed

GCMM has already printed 110,000 evangelism books for Ukrainian refugees.

100,000 more are needed now.

War leaves its mark

About 10 million Ukrainians have had to leave their homes during the Russian invasion, heading west. War has a lasting effect on a person's soul. According to WHO (World Health Organization), about a quarter of the population has experienced some kind of psychological trauma.

Peace of mind is shaken

"The sound of continuous air raid sirens causes a lot of stress. There is a constant fear of another attack. Anxiety, panic attacks, depression and insomnia have become the norm. Psychological consequences of war are long-term and last at least 35-40 years," says Soloviva a military psychologist. Everything that happens, is passed from one generation to the next.

In peacetime societies, an average of 5 to 6 percent of the population are affected by psychological traumas. In Ukraine, it is expected that this figure will reach 25 percent of the population within a few years.

High demand for evangelism books

The evangelism book created for a nation at war shares the message of the

Gospel and provides encouragement for the soul. The word of God acts as an anchor for the soul amidst the most anguishing storms in life.

Stories of fellow countrymen who have made a decision of faith with a model of the prayer of salvation, guide the reader to a personal relationship with God and His Word.

Since GCMM had already begun a mega-city campaign in Ukraine ahead of the war, a modest quantity of these books had already been distributed in villages and homes in the conflict areas. The impact has been profound. The full impact of our interrupted mega-city campaign remains unknown and unfinished as Russian tanks rolled into Ukraine with giant billboards of the Power to Change through Christ in plain view.

Heat for the home and an anchor for the soul

"GCMM has been delivering humanitarian aid, some in the form of wood-burning stoves. But in addition to stoves and other aid, souls need an anchor – faith in God and the future," says CEO, Hannu Haukka.

How can we do this together? We can pray for Ukraine.

Prayer brings strength and changes circumstances in life. Please pray for the people of Ukraine.

HOMES ACROSS UKRAINE GET WOOD

Russia has systematically and repeatedly hit Ukrainian power grids with its missiles and has caused an unprecedented humanitarian crisis in the country.

Due to the strikes, 24 provinces and cities in Ukraine have been without electricity and water.

Towards the end of last year, we accepted delivery of 2,600 locally manufactured wood-burning stoves.

2,000 more wood-burning stoves

At the present time, thousands of additional stoves are on order and GCMM has delivered over 6,000 wood-burning stoves to villages and cities in the southern and eastern areas of Ukraine including Kherson, Dnipro, Donetsk, Lugansk, Kharkiv, Zaporizhzhia and Khmelnytskyi.

We want to thank each of you that have provided stoves for Ukrainian families.

Three types of stoves to conflict areas

The cost of one wood-burning stove was set at \$100 - \$125, which included the material, labour and home delivery. The stoves were designed for multi-purpose use—as a hearth, a cooking surface, for boiling water and drying clothes.

While fathers and sons are at the frontlines fighting for their wives and children, we have been assisting their families.

Zaporizhzhia stoves

At the onset of the wood-burning stove initiative in October last year, we placed an order for a total of 25 stoves from a local metal workshop in Zaporizhzhia. Metal workers who had fled Mariupol at the beginning of the invasion volunteered their services and produced the stoves at cost, for \$50 per unit. When we placed another order for 200 stoves, additional workers were hired to complete the job thereby increasing the unit cost to \$100.

Ternopil stove production

The metal workshop in Zaporizhzhia was struggling to keep up with the sudden demand when another workshop in Ternopil, in western Ukraine was located and accepted the next 200 wood-burning stove order. Raw materials for this order were more refined and included the outer surface paint job of the stoves. The unit cost remained the same at \$100.

Stoves made in Kyiv

The volume of orders continued to grow. As winter approached, we received requests for more and more wood-burning stove orders from areas in Kherson, Kharkiv, Donetsk, Luhansk, Chernihiv, Zhytomyr, Sumy and Kyiv provinces.

The metal workshop in Kyiv had a greater production capacity as the order volume increased to more than 5,000 units. Not only were they able to produce stoves in larger quantities, but minor improvements were also made along the way.



Are wood-burning stoves needed when winter is over?

The question begs to be asked. Are wood-burning stoves even needed when winter weather lets up?

Stoves are needed well into the spring. Cooking food and boiling water are year round needs for survival. Additionally, freezing nightly temperatures



can continue until May. Without heat, even mild sub-zero temperatures can cause frostbite.

According to the local authority assessments, hundreds of thousands of families with children are vulnerable to exposure to the elements. One wood-burning stove can mean the difference for a family to remain healthy, perhaps even saving a life.

Stoves are still needed. In addition to stoves, we have been delivering firewood to the people of the sparsely forested southern region of Ukraine by the truckload.

On behalf of Ukrainian families, a deeply heartfelt thankyou for your help. You have risen to the occasion in an amazing way, standing with them in their hour of need. "We delight to praise what we enjoy because the praise not merely expresses but completes the enjoyment...it is frustrating to have discovered a new author and not to be able to tell anyone how good he is; to come suddenly, at the turn of the road, upon some mountain valley of unexpected grandeur and then to have to keep silent because the people with you care for it no more than for a tin can in the ditch; to hear a good joke and find no one to share it with."

I've been reflecting on this quite a bit lately. I've been thinking about how much my upbringing and this culture have taught me to keep both my faith and my finances private. Is this obsession with private living, right? Is this conviction towards privacy biblical?

For me, a large part of this came from a misunderstanding that I had for years of Matthew 6:2-4. I believed that Jesus was teaching us to give in secret. But that is not quite right. I forgot that these few verses were part of a much larger sermon. When I considered 6:1 and 5:14-16, I was able to zero in on the complete point that Jesus was making:

My motives for my faith actions (including my generosity) determine whether I am commanded to make them public or not.

Jesus is teaching a spiritual doctrine of the heart, not a legalistic doctrine of secrecy.

That which brings God glory is not to be put under a bushel. That which brings glory to me, is.

My challenge for myself moving forward is to complete the enjoyment of praise by sharing it with others. I'm beginning with my family, but I won't stop there. Serving and partnering in this ministry has caused me to 'Praise the Lord', and I want others to experience what I have experienced.

Will you join me in this challenge? Will you share the wonderous workings of God through this ministry with 5 or 6 close friends and family that cause you to praise? If you do, send an email to me at dave@gcmministries.com and tell me how it went.

What else is there to say except, Praise the Lord!













The vice chair of the military administration of the Kharkiv region thanked GCMM upon receiving 230 wood-burning stoves. Russia continues to shell Kharkiv and its surrounding areas daily.





Photo above: Wood-burning stoves arriving in Kharkiv from Kyiv, are offloaded to other trucks for delivery. The stoves are also picked up from this loading dock with domestic vehicles.

Below: This is the very first stove built for the initial 25-stove order from Zaporizhzhia in October.





Photo above: Wood-burning stoves from the metal wor more refined materials and finishing touches.





kshop in Ternopil, in western Ukraine, were produced using





Left to right: Anatoli Kolomejets guest at the Zaporizhzhia logistics center, Gennady Mokhnenko Military Chaplain, and Hannu Haukka.



Wood-burning stoves have been distributed to thousands of homes in the hardest hit zones. A single house may shelter anywhere from 2 to 100 people.

Below: Sharing borscht soup, in an underground bunker near the line of fire.



A Special Christmas Celebration In Ukraine's Kherson City

Christmas in Ukraine is celebrated on January 7th according to the Julian calendar.

A vanload of Christmas gifts from Finland arrived just in time for the celebrations in the recently liberated city of Kherson and the surrounding area.

The journey took 5 days to reach Kherson Evangelical Baptist Church. Gifts were distributed to about 400 children who were expectantly waiting in the main sanctuary for celebrations to begin, along with their mothers and grandmothers.

Russian forces continued to shell Kherson from their posi-

tions across the river.

Our team delivered Christmas gifts to children located in the nearby village of Komyshany, where children had 'dared to come' as far as their front gate. These children had been unable to attend the Christmas celebration as Russian military operations on the other side of the Dnipro River blocked safe passage to Kherson.

The yellow gift boxes were received with thankfulness and joy. All the while, loud grad-rocket explosions could be heard in the background a short distance away. We learned after the fact, that rockets had hit detached houses

about 300 feet from where we had been

GCMM was the organizer of this Christmas fundraising drive, and their partner *Halpahalli* arranged drop-off depots for donated items in Finland.

The gift boxes contained gloves, socks, hats, toothbrushes, toothpaste, soap, school supplies, pencils, erasers, notebooks and sharpeners, flashlights with extra batteries, children's thermoses, candy and Christmas cards.

A warm thank-you for helping GCMM get these gifts to the children of Ukraine!





Gift boxes were also distributed to families with children, in the surrounding villages near the city of Kherson. The yellow boxes were received with thankfulness. Loud grad-rocket explosions were heard all the while a short distance away.



At the GCMM headquarters in Finland, the Christmas gift project lead by Laura Haukka, loading the van with the gifts. GCMM was the organizer of this Christmas fundraiser drive, worked with our partner Halpahalli who provided drop-off depots for the gifts.



The children of the Kherson Evangelical Baptist Church received gifts at the Christmas celebration that was arranged for the children.

THAILAND MEDIA CAM

Great Commission Media Ministries CEO Hannu Haukka, recently returned from a visit to Thailand. Christian leaders there have long desired a mega-city evangelism campaign in their country. Pastors from the five thousand Thai churches belonging to the Evangelical Nexus movement are ready to organize the campaign together with the help of GCMM. The Nexus churches are truly hopeful this campaign comes together for them, 2023-2024.

Religion in Thailand

The majority of the country is Buddhist, which is about 94% of the total population, with Muslims 5%, Christians 1%, and others around 0,03%. The population of Thailand in 2022 according to our sources, was 71.7 million, with an increase of 0,13% from 2021.

Campaign goal

The goal of the evangelism campaign is to effectively convey the gospel message using media to millions of homes in Thailand. Whether to expand this campaign beyond the cities of Bangkok, Chiang Mai and Bechabun and into the whole country is a matter of active discernment and is yet to be determined.

In April 2023, GCMM plans to attend the 5000 Nexus-movement church leader's convention. Planning and creating a strategy together is paramount, to effectively accomplish a mega-city media campaign of this magnitude at a church level.



PAIGN—PRAYER NEEDED



Mega-City challenge

Evangelism-focused media campaigns held in large cities have greater challenges than ones held in rural areas. In a mega-city context, missions work "competes" with so much other messaging, says Hannu Haukka. In rural areas, the situation is comparatively different from what it is like in a larger metropolis.

In the city of Bechabun, there is an active and sizeable community of Christians and where two new churches have recently been established. About 140 people came to faith as the churches were being established.

Central Thailand is an agricultural region, where a pastor may be working hard in the fields throughout the day and holding meetings in the evening.

At a service held at the local market, the pastor asked if there was anyone there who had never heard of the name 'Jesus' before.

All in attendance lifted their hands. They had never even heard the name Jesus before, nevermind what He represents to them! When Jesus gave his followers the 'command' to go into all the world to proclaim the Good News, it was surely for people in nations such as this.

The late apostle and missionary Oswald Smith stated that no one has the right to hear the gospel message twice before everyone has heard it at least once. Thailand certainly qualifies!

We ask for prayer as campaign preparations are underway and for laborers 'for the harvest' during the campaign. A campaign of this magnitude requires about 10,000 volunteers to be trained.

THE GOSPEL TO THE JE

Each day of the year is a new opportunity that we want to use for the Kingdom of God.

The Bible speaks of "hearing of wars and rumours of wars". This should not alarm us, but encourage us to preach the Gospel, as according to the Gospel of Mark the end is still to come. (Mark 13:7-10)

The GCMM Israel ministry department's main goal is to share the Gospel with Jews worldwide. The cornerstone of this ministry is media. We produce programming for TV channels, radio and social media for Russian-speaking Jews.

Israel congregations hoping for a media campaign

I visited some Israeli congregations recently. They are waiting to work with us, on an evangelism media campaign in Hebrew and Russian reaching Eilat in the south and Haifa in the north.

The first media campaign took place in 2008 with powerful results as thousands of contacts were made. We have held several media campaigns since then resulting in congregations and prayer groups being birthed in Israel. With each successive campaign our impact grows, thanks to the local talents and expertise in advertising and media from our 30-church partner network in Israel. As the campaign comes together, we will use Russian radio and a TV channel.

A new national evangelism campaign is our dream and a subject of prayer. We challenge you to join us. As we make plans to that end, we continue providing humanitarian aid to congregation refugee programs, as funds become available.

Jews in Europe

Russia's attack on Ukraine caused a wave of millions of refugees to enter Europe. Thousands of Jews have also fled and are now spread out in different areas of Europe. God is birthing new Messianic churches in Germany, Austria and Poland.

A strong partner in ministry, the Messianic Church in Kyiv, is supporting these new churches spiritually as they are being planted. We too want to be involved in supporting them in prayer and providing humanitarian aid.

A world conference is being organized by the LCJE (Lausanne

Consultation on Jewish Evangelism) in Poland, where we are planning and praying together with different organizations, missions, and church leaders for new ways to reach Jews in this changing world.

We have also received a request to participate in an evangelism campaign this summer, which is being organized in Krakow and will include several Messianic and Christian churches. Please pray that God would guide this project and that we

Religious traditions are strongly present in day-to-day life in Israel. The photo is from a bar mitzvah celebration.



WS IS GOD'S PRIORITY

could be involved financially as well.

Let's not be afraid of the uprisings in the world, but let us fasten our eyes on God who gives us triumphs in all tribulations (Romans 8:37). Thank you for walking alongside us, your intercessory prayers and support to God's chosen people!

Blessed regards, Pirjo Karttunen GCMM Israel Ministry

The Messianic Church of Kyiv expands into church planting around Europe.





A New Year And A New Task

As director of the GCMM Arabic/ Islamic Ministry department, I want to express my deep gratitude and appreciation to all our loyal supporters and friends this past year, and as we continue serving in 2023. Thanks to you we are reaching millions of people for Christ around the world—to many who have never heard about Jesus Christ, through 18 satellite channels, internet sites and social media.

A new vision to reach the Islamic world

God has opened an amazing opportunity to serve in North Africa. One of our ministry priorities has been to develop new projects with a focus to reach the Islamic nation's most unreachable area(s). North Af-

rica has become a focus. In January, I had an opportunity to travel there.

The main purpose of the trip was to portray what life was like for those after they had converted to Christianity from Islam. Unable to travel, we came to them to interview and film their life-stories. I met with pastors and leaders from North African churches. We discussed the challenges believers in the communities are encountering, particularly when practicing their faith.

My eyes were opened. It was apparent that the challenges were much more than we had understood them to be.

Many have converted from Islam to Christianity, but are often found lacking in areas of discipleship and leadership. In order to help those who have come to faith in North Africa, more teaching about faith in Christ is needed. Also, how to live out their newly found faith without fear in their own community.

Pastor Brunson imprisoned for the sake of Christ

I was very taken by Andrew Brunson whom I met while in North Africa, who had been imprisoned for his faith in Turkey.

Brunson is an evangelical pastor, who lived in Turkey for 25 years and was the lead pastor in a small Presbyterian church in the city of Izmir.

Pastor Brunson and his wife Norine served Syrian refugees in Turkey as well. In October 2016, the Turkish authorities arrested Brunson and accused him of spying, for help-



ing terrorist organizations and assisting in Turkey's unsuccessful coup in 2016. He was even threatened with a 35-year sentence and imprisonment. Pastor Brunson consistently denied the charges against him.

"Let it be known," when he wrote from prison in 2018, "I am not in jail for any wrongdoing, but because of who I am, a Christian Pastor. I believe it is truly an honor to suffer for the sake of Jesus Christ, like many have done before me."

Pastor Brunson shares, "My two years in prison were marked with what I would call the 'silence of God', and I had no sense of His presence. My earlier experiences of closeness with Him were so rich and tangible. The departure of His presence was because my heart was so closed to God. I felt a deep sense of woundedness. I was the only Christian in the prison, and the only Christian I was in touch with during those two years was Norine, my wife. I was very lonely



An abundant variety of fruits and vegetables offered at a typical Arabic marketplace.

and isolated in my faith. I prayed for peace a lot. But I didn't feel true peace. The grace of God brought me forward, but the strength and determination to find peace and joy were harder to attain than I thought they would be."

Now that Pastor Brunson has been freed, he wants to see church leaders informed, for effective leadership for the benefit of everyone in the area and for all nations. I feel this is a worthy effort. The aim of the Arabic Ministry of GCMM is to produce at least 1,000 programs in several different languages this year so that through them we can reach as many Islamic nations as possible. I believe that together we can achieve this goal.

Hani Henein GCMM Arabic/Islamic Ministry





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Like the heroes of the Bible listed in Hebrews 11, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Gideon, Barak, Jephtah, Samuel, David, we too can be a part of God's great works in our generation. Let us be part of the miracles of God together! Dr. Hannu Haukka



