



EMBRACE

THE CHRISTIAN DEVELOPMENT CHARITY TACKLING POVERTY AND INJUSTICE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

SUMMER 2025



Supporting Syria's traumatised children

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WELCOME



I'm deeply grateful for your faithful support; your compassion and commitment make everything in these pages possible.

I recently returned from visiting our partners in Jerusalem and the West Bank. While my heart is still broken from all I witnessed, travelling to stand in solidarity with them and listen, on your behalf, was a real privilege.

In this issue of Embrace, we share stories of hope, transformation, and resilience across the Middle East, including the remarkable news that our partners in Gaza have been able to repair and reopen one of their health clinics in Gaza City

even in the midst of war. We also bring you an inspiring testimony from Eduard, once part of a violent gang, now a minister transforming lives in Tel Aviv through our partner Aviv Ministry.

We're excited to launch a new collection of ceramics through our shop, and we're delighted to offer a free Embrace T-shirt as a thank you if you come and join us at Greenbelt festival in August.

We also celebrate our new Church Partners, extending a warm welcome to our friends in Oxford. We invite your church to join us in supporting and learning more about the incredible work of our partners across the Middle East.

Editor: Beth Amplett | **Editorial:** Matt Adcock | **Design & Production:** fisherdesign.co.uk

Embrace the Middle East | Old Library Building | Queen Victoria Road | High Wycombe
Buckinghamshire | HP11 1BG

01494 897950 | info@embraceme.org | embraceme.org | @FollowEmbrace   

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“This issue reflects your impact, from our feature on equal rights advocacy at the Learning Centre for the Deaf to stories of safe spaces for children and courageous refugee work in Egypt.”

This issue reflects your impact, from our feature on equal rights advocacy at the Learning Centre for the Deaf in Lebanon, to stories of safe spaces for children in Syria, and courageous refugee work in Egypt.

Thank you for journeying with us; your help sustains and encourages us and our partners in these desperate times.

Jamie Eyre

Jamie Eyre,
Chief Executive

GOING TO GREENBELT?

Grab an Embrace T-shirt!

Embrace will be at Greenbelt festival, leading worship and workshops and selling Middle Eastern products from our trading stand.

We would love to see as many people as possible in Embrace t-shirts! If you would like one, email events@embraceme.org to let us know your size (XS-XXL) and come to our stand at the festival to pick it up!



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WITNESSING LIFE UNDER OCCUPATION

In May, Dr Ruth Valerio, Embrace's Director of Programmes, Partnerships and Advocacy, visited the West Bank, witnessing the incredible work of our partners but also the challenges they face from living under Israeli occupation.

Simple journeys are a daily struggle, as Ruth explains:

Not being able to travel freely has become a huge issue for Palestinians in the West Bank. I could feel the frustration in every conversation I had.

There are now around 850 Israeli 'movement obstacles' in the

West Bank, a third of which are road gates. The Israeli authorities use these gates to close a road whenever they want, with no warning. A journey you thought was going to take 20 minutes suddenly takes 90. One partner told me that driving from Jenin to Nablus – a distance of just 22 miles

Pictures: (above) Ruth (second from left) with Embrace CEO Jamie Eyre and staff from the Jerusalem Princess Basma Centre, May 2025; (right) The West Bank, May 2025.



“Each person I spend time with tells of the psychological toll it takes to keep going in a system deliberately set up to grind you down.”

– took them five hours because of road closures and long queues at checkpoints.

As I go back to Jerusalem across the checkpoint, going through the usual procedure of passport checking before being allowed back on the bus, I see two young Palestinian men pulled out of the queue. They are made to stand against a wall, with their faces pressing into it and their arms and legs spread out. They are searched, as are the contents of their bags which are tipped onto the ground. When the young men get back onto the bus, their clothes are dirty, and they wearily dust themselves off before settling back into the rest of their day.

‘Apartheid’ is a controversial word with a specific technical meaning, and one to be used with care. But as I hear about and see the systematic and structural segregation between the Palestinian and Israeli settler communities, and the harassment and debasement metered out on the Palestinian people, I struggle to find an appropriate alternative.



Each person I spend time with tells of the psychological toll it takes to keep going in a system deliberately set up to grind you down. I don’t hear anything good said about the Palestinian Authority either.

But our partners’ work is a source of hope: Embrace’s partners continue to provide healthcare services; education for children with disabilities; psychosocial support to young people traumatised by the violence; and give legal advice to Palestinians facing discrimination.

This work is a beacon of light in the darkness. It’s a sign of resistance too, of resilience and a determination not to give in.



Read more from Ruth at
embraceme.org/blog/my-trip-to-the-west-bank

Scan me!



UPDATE

Caritas reopens clinic in Gaza City

Embrace supports Caritas Jerusalem's emergency cash-assistance programme in Gaza – a lifeline for families struggling to get the basics such as food and shelter. The team also provide vital medical services.

The ceasefire in January meant displaced staff were able to return to Gaza City. Since then, they have been repairing their damaged medical centre there. In May, despite the humanitarian situation once again deteriorating, the team were able to reopen the clinic!



Pictures: (clockwise from left) The damage to the medical centre; working on repairs; the re-opened in clinic in May 2025.

REGULAR GIVING:

Your Present, Their Future

At Embrace, we stand alongside courageous local Christian partners who are rooted in their communities and working daily to bring healing and hope. Whether they are running schools, delivering healthcare or supporting those living with disabilities, our partners are at the heart of the work we do.

A regular gift offers our partners something incredibly powerful:

stability. In a region often marked by conflict, financial difficulty and displacement, regular giving by Embrace supporters means our partners can plan ahead, grow their work and continue serving those who need it most.

When you give regularly, you

become a vital part of the work of Middle East Christians.

Giving by Direct Debit is a cost-effective way to support Embrace, reducing our fundraising costs, meaning more of your donation goes directly to the people who need it. It's a simple, effective and powerful way to make a difference.



To find out more about setting up a regular gift, head to embraceme.org/regular-giving, scan the QR code or call 01494 897950



FROM GANGSTER TO MINISTER EDUARD'S STORY



**Embrace partner
Aviv Ministry
supports people
living with
addictions on the**

**streets of South Tel Aviv. Run by
members of Israel's Messianic
Jewish community, their centres
at Tel Aviv and Ashkelon provide
shelter, warm meals, medical care
and rehab services.**

Eduard (pictured above) heads up the Aviv centre and, like many on the team, he has personal experience of struggling with addiction:

"In my youth, I was involved in a criminal gang. For armed robberies, I served time in prison.

For 15 long years I was trapped in severe drug addiction. I went through treatment many times, but nothing helped. Eventually, I lost everything!

The Lord says that before something new can be built, the old must be completely destroyed. That's exactly what happened in my life. Everything collapsed – my family, my job, my health. Everything was lost. I ended up on the streets.

At that time, I had just been released from prison. Some people placed me in an apartment of a Christian, saying, "Stay here until we can find money and drugs for you". But this man started praying

for me. It was a small room. He gave me his bed to sleep in, while he knelt beside me and prayed for my salvation.

The first time I entered a church, I was shocked to see some of my old acquaintances from my past life. One well-known criminal figure was also there. I asked him, "what are you doing here? Did you get lost? This is a church!"

He looked at me and said, "If you can show me a better way, I will follow it."

His answer sobered me. In that church, God's presence deeply touched me and I walked

out of the service a completely different person. The things I used to do so easily, suddenly something inside me stopped me. A new inner voice was guarding me from sin.

Today with all my strength, I try to serve in rehabilitation, helping people who were once like me. I lead the Aviv Centre in Tel Aviv, a rehabilitation centre, and a humanitarian mission in Ashkelon.

God restored the family I once lost. What God unites, the devil has no power to destroy. If we remain faithful to Christ, God will make the impossible, possible."



Please pray for Eduard, the rest of the Aviv Ministry team, and all those they are helping. You can hear more from the team at Aviv in the latest episode of our podcast.

**SCAN QR CODE
TO LISTEN**



Pictures: Prayer ministry at the centre; The Aviv Ministry Centre; the soup kitchen.

Get your church involved

“So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God” Ephesians 2:19

It is a huge encouragement to us to see churches across the UK showing compassion and solidarity with our sisters and brothers in the Middle East, as part of the One Household of God.

Become a church partner

We are especially grateful to St Michael and All Angels, Hughenden, and Lidgett Park Methodist, Leeds, who have made Embrace their church partner this year! If this is something you would like to explore too, we would love to talk to you more about it.

Host an Embrace speaker

Our church engagement team love to get out and about to meet churches and speak at one of your services or church groups, so we can tell you more about what our partners are doing, and what you can be praying for.

Use our Devotional Resources

Our stations of the cross are still available for your church to display (all you need to do is arrange pick up and drop off)!

During Holy Week, New Road Baptist Church in Oxford displayed our stations, and opened their church up so that the people of Oxford could come and explore, reading about the story of Easter and also about what Christians in the Middle East are doing today.



Drop us an email at engagement@embraceme.org to speak to our Church Engagement team about how to get your church involved.



Christian Hope is Not Passive Optimism

Amid the horror unfolding in Gaza and the seemingly unresolvable Israeli-Palestinian conflict, many of us have turned to our faith to find hope. But for Daniel Munayer, CEO of our partner Musalaha, the hope we draw from the Gospel should not be passive optimism but active – and it comes at a cost.

Speaking at our recent lecture at St Martin-in-the-Fields, 'Is there Hope for the Holy Land?', Daniel told us that Jesus "presented a new vision, a new creation and has invited us to participate in his mission of reconciling the world back to God's self". He spoke of the reconciliation work that Musalaha does in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory and asked, "Are you in the

UK also willing to pay a price for hope, for reconciliation? Solidarity with the oppressed, comes with a cost."

In the UK, emotions around the conflict, and fear of inflaming divisions, can stop people from speaking out. Many choose to stay silent in an effort to remain neutral. But for one Israeli Jew and staff member at Musalaha, silence is not neutrality:

“In a context of oppression, neutrality doesn't place you outside of what's happening - it helps sustain it.”

“In a personal moment of deep vulnerability and when I needed protection, those who could have acted and protected me stayed silent. That silence and disengagement didn't feel neutral – it felt like abandonment. In a context of oppression, neutrality doesn't place you outside of what's happening – it helps sustain it.”

They believe that neutrality is not passive, but an active choice. It means choosing comfort and privilege over justice and truth.

In the UK we have freedom of speech and association, and direct access to our elected representatives. That privilege comes with influence to speak out against injustice. When we do that, we amplify the voices of

people whose voices are being suppressed; not speaking out for the sake of neutrality has the direct effect of keeping those voices suppressed.

Christians are called to be people of peace, love and forgiveness, but also to “learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause” (*Isaiah 1:17*). This rules out neutrality.

This is why Embrace will continue to speak out on the alarming situation in Gaza. If you want to join us, or speak out on other injustices in the world, a first step would be to write to your MP to raise your concern and urge them to pressure the UK government to take meaningful action.



You can watch a full recording of Daniel's lecture at embraceme.org/is-there-hope-for-the-holy-land



Pictures: (left) The march against the war in Gaza (credit: Sophie Popplewell, Unsplash); (above) Daniel speaking at St-Martin-in-the-Fields (credit: Clear Aperture Media).

SERVING SUDANESE REFUGEES



The Sudan war has resulted in the displacement of nearly 13 million people. Staff at our partner **Refuge Egypt** are working tirelessly to meet the urgent and growing needs of Sudanese refugees arriving in Cairo.

The crisis began in April 2023, when violent clashes erupted between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces.

According to the UN, this conflict has worsened many of Sudan's existing challenges, such as ongoing violence, disease outbreaks, economic and political instability, and climate emergencies. Millions have fled since the fighting began.

Egypt is the country hosting the largest number of Sudanese refugees – an estimated 1.5 million. All Saints Cathedral in Cairo (*above right*), where Refuge Egypt is based, serves as a safe haven for new arrivals.



Refugees are welcomed with food and drink, assessed for immediate assistance, and referred for medical or psychological support.

Refuge Egypt's Zamalek clinic (*left*) has become a central refuge, particularly for Sudanese women and children seeking safety, medical care and humanitarian support.



MARYAM'S STORY

Three-year-old Maryam's life was turned upside down when she lost both of her parents in the ongoing war in Sudan. Her neighbour took her in and, seeking safety, took her on the difficult and dangerous journey to Egypt. Although they reached Cairo safely, hardship soon followed, when Maryam's fragile health took a turn for the worse.



In February 2024, Maryam was brought to Refuge Egypt's paediatric clinic for under-fives, suffering from a fever, persistent cough and shortness of breath. Her tiny body was weak, her face pale, and her breathing laboured. Urgent lab tests confirmed that she was gravely ill: a blood transfusion was her only hope.

Two weeks after the blood transfusion, Maryam returned to the clinic – and the transformation was remarkable. Her energy

was returning, and her smile was brighter. To support her recovery, Refuge Egypt provided iron supplements, multivitamins and a food box to help restore her strength. She also received psychosocial support to help her heal emotionally from her traumatic experiences.

After six follow-up visits, Maryam was a different child: laughing, playing and full of life once again.



"In February 2024, Maryam was brought to Refuge Egypt's paediatric clinic for under-fives, suffering from a fever, persistent cough and shortness of breath. Her tiny body was weak, her face pale, and her breathing laboured."



This Refugee Week (16-22 June), please keep the staff and the people they serve in your prayers. You can find out more about the work of Refuge Egypt and our other partners supporting displaced families at embraceme.org/refugees



Changing attitudes, improving access:

The fight for deaf rights in Lebanon

Embrace partner the Learning Centre for the Deaf (LCD) has been providing specialist medical and educational support for deaf children and young people in Lebanon since 2001.

The centre helps plug a gap in Lebanon's educational and social provision for deaf children by providing specialist pre-school support and an education programme for teenagers wishing to go onto university.

It also leads the way in campaigning for equal rights for Lebanon's deaf community –

including lobbying for improved access to education, employment rights and healthcare support.

Dr Hussein Ismail is the founder and director of LCD:

"I am a deaf person myself and I'm very proud of being deaf. My dream is to empower. My dream is to encourage. In Lebanon there is not so much human rights for people with disabilities, especially for deaf people."

Thanks to Dr Hussein and his team, working in collaboration with other disability groups, this is starting to change! They have been working with the Lebanese Ministry of Social Affairs to increase support for people with disabilities in the workplace and improve the accessibility of the government's National Disability Assistance programme (for example, by



Above: Dr Hussein with deaf students celebrating their graduation



“We have seen how the development of education and the development of concepts around deaf people have dramatically changed - positively and remarkably changed.”

Dr Hussein Ismail, founder and director of the LCD

providing training for government staff on how to communicate with deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals).

Recently, thanks to the LCD's campaigning, the Ministry of Information agreed to the introduction of sign-language interpretation on the prime-time TV news programme. Dr Hussein told us:

“We have received a great deal of positive feedback, with many deaf individuals in Lebanon expressing appreciation for being able to follow and understand the news.”

The team also run a range of events to help raise awareness of the issues facing the deaf community, as well as providing advocacy training sessions for deaf people to enable them to join the campaign for equal rights.

“We go on social media, on television and provide lectures and



Above: The integrated nursery at LCD.

sessions and we have seen how the development of education and the development of concepts around deaf people have dramatically changed – positively and remarkably changed.

This gives us great motivation, so we continue to serve deaf people in Lebanon. What is not available in Lebanon, we try to provide - with God's guidance, with God's protection and encouragement.”

To hear more from Dr Hussein, and find out how his Christian faith inspires his work, head to:
embraceme.org/blog/the-learning-centre-for-the-deaf



New gifts & accessories for summer

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