



Phil and Sylvie Good

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Location: Lebanon



What we do: Supporting multiple organisations discipling new believers across the MENA region and fundraising to bring the good news across borders

Dear All,

This will be our last link letter, as we have come to the end of our time as CMS mission partners. Our hearts are full and it is hard to find the words to express everything that we would like to say.

Our journey lasted five years and included a lot of different parts. It is safe to say the “parts” were not the things we expected at the beginning, though this is a common mission experience. The one feature that has consistently been true is that we have been drawn to support refugees and in particular the Syrian refugees.

Lebanon is a challenging place to live, the culture is quite different to the UK even though on the outside it looks very Western. During our time there we lived through many challenges which has made Lebanon a very sad place. Firstly we had a small “revolution” on 17 October 2019, which coincided with the beginning of the banking crisis that followed shortly after. This was also made even worse by the pandemic, which cut off the tourist trade and isolated the economy even more. While all this was happening there was the “Beirut Blast”, which added more confusion and undermined an already fragile infrastructure. We were there for all these things and we felt your prayer support as we tried to reflect the Peace of Christ to the troubled people around us. After a brief diversion to Morocco and Egypt, we returned to our refugee community and carried on being there for them as the economic problems became more and more severe with unimaginable inflation and cash shortages.

We left on 26 September and just 11 days later on 7 October the current situation in Israel erupted, which casts another cloud of worry over Lebanon. Hezbollah continues to harass Israel across the southern border, threatening to embroil Lebanon in another war. We are glad we left in a planned way before the trouble, as to leave now would look like we were running away, which would be a difficult message to leave our friends.

With the internet allowing cheap connection and even video calls, Sylvie is still in touch with the refugees and I can often hear excited voices talking in the other room. We know that our friends who call us here in the UK are also talking with siblings and cousins in other European countries, in America and Canada, and of course with their parents who generally are still back in Syria. This helps them feel less isolated.

But our time there has come to an end and a new chapter beckons.

Sylvie comments...

Times move on, and now, unbelievably, we have left Lebanon and returned home to the UK. Five and a



Saying goodbye to the ruins at Byblos.

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With Jesus
With each other
To the edges



half years seems to have gone by very quickly, but, like having small children, the years go by quickly but some of the days last forever!

Small children are on our minds as we now have two little grandsons and are enjoying getting to know them. Leaving Lebanon was hard, as there are so many people we have come to love, but it is a joy to be back with our family and to be able to join in family celebrations again. This week we are going away for

a short break with my sisters and their husbands to celebrate my sister's 70th birthday. Family is very, very much on God's heart. So God, when he chose to bring Heaven down to us, began as a baby, in a family. When that baby, Jesus, grew up, a lot of his message was about God being our Father and we are his dearly loved children.

This message sustains me as I think of our dear friends in Beirut, because though we have left them, they know that their Father in Heaven never will leave them, and I know that his care for them continues even if we are no longer there.

Phil again...

Christmas six years ago we had sold our house in Dorset and we were transitioning out of the UK; now this Christmas we are in our own house near Trowbridge but we are trying to sell it and preparing to transition to an as yet unknown place in England. This transition may well be harder than the last one, while we are coming "home" to England, England has changed and we have changed too. It will take us time to adjust.

Jesus came and lived with us ordinary people and at Christmas we celebrate this wonderful truth. We will hear in carol services this Christmas from the Gospel of John 1:14 *And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.* We have had the privilege of being Jesus' hands and feet to the people where he sent us, and in truth we have seen Jesus in their hands and feet as we walked together through the slums of East Beirut. It has been a humbling journey full of wonder and beauty, and yes, grace and truth.

Thanks for all your support and prayers over the years – without you it would not be possible. The work across the Middle East continues as we leave, new faces are going, others also need support as they carry on the work of being Jesus' hands and feet. Please do consider continuing your support of the work – contact churchrelations@churchmissionsociety.org and CMS can help link you up with others in need of support.

Love, Phil and Sylvie



Photos from top to bottom: Landing at Heathrow... again; The team of refugee women that Sylvie leaves behind to run the creche; Our refugee friends finally arriving in the USA; Our house in the UK.



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Please note that opinions expressed in link letters are those of mission partners, not necessarily of Church Mission Society.

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