

BWA urges prayer and support for Lebanese Christians

October 8, 2024

Lebanon is facing a mass displacement crisis amid escalating violence, despite for years having “served as a place of sanctuary for refugees fleeing violence, including 1.5 million people from war-torn Syria,” the Baptist World Alliance reports on its website.

Prayer and assistance are vital to shore up spirits and provide for the physical needs of Christians and the Lebanese civilians from other religious backgrounds [they are serving](#), BWA contends.

One of BWA’s partners in the region, the [Lebanese Society for Educational and Social Development](#), rebranded last year to Thimar-LSESD. “Thimar” is the Arabic word for “fruits.”

In addition to food boxes at the ready for the displaced in Beirut, Thimar-LSESD has provided humanitarian aid in [Lebanon for the past year](#). Their school is serving as a shelter, where mattresses have been collected for those forced to flee their homes.

As the humanitarian situation continues to degrade with increasing violence, urgent help is needed for [Baptist World Aid](#) to partner with fellow Christians in Lebanon, who are serving in this time of great need.

Following bombings in southern Lebanon and Beirut, the [United Nations estimated](#) more than 1 million Lebanese had been forced to flee their homes.

As of Sept. 30, more than 100,000 migrants fleeing the violence and threat of a potential land invasion have reached Syria, and the outflow continues,

the UN report states.

Since that report, additional bombings in Northern Lebanon and again in the south continue to push the numbers of displaced people even higher.

Choosing joy



Merritt Johnston highlights God's work in Lebanon, from a garden in Lebanon recently. (Screenshot / Calli Keener)

A few weeks ago, BWA Women Executive Director, J. Merritt Johnston was in Lebanon, serving among faithful Baptist women and men. They met together with Baptists from several countries in the region to worship.

Johnston spoke about the faithfulness of Baptist women in the region in a [video](#). Though these women were facing difficult circumstances, violence and tremendous loss, their time together was peppered with laughter.

Despite all the challenges surrounding them, the women were choosing joy, Johnston noted.

The women stated the best thing about living in Lebanon was family—biological and the family of God—the community they are experiencing there.

Together, the women “are experiencing what it means, even in times of great trial, to count it all joy,” Johnston explained.

Conversely, the women consistently described “the unknown” as the most difficult thing about living there.

“Having to live day-by-day not knowing what will come tomorrow,” is hard, yet they are choosing to live by faith, not by fear, Johnston said.

“And what a lesson that is for all of us,” she asserted. If they can choose to live in joy and peace amid the violence in the region, so can others wherever they might be, she said.

Johnston asked Baptists worldwide to join in praying for the sisters and brothers in this region. She asked for prayer that the Lord would bring “just peace” to the region and that God would strengthen the faithful who are serving the Lord there every day.

Today, Lebanese hospitals overflow with wounded. And Lebanese schools have been turned into shelters for those who have fled north hoping to find safety, as the threat of full-scale war looms, BWA reports.

In the past month, more than 1,000 people—men, women and children—are reported to have died in the wake of bombings across southern Lebanon, bringing the total killed in Lebanon to at least 2,000 since Oct. 8, 2023, [NBC News reports](#).

[The New York Times](#) reported “an intense barrage on southern Lebanon and a retaliatory attack targeting Hamas in southern Gaza,” on the anniversary of Hezbollah’s surprise cross-border attacks on Israel Oct. 7, 2023.

Several news outlets are reporting Israeli warnings for Lebanese civilians to clear out of a wide portion of the southern border region may indicate a

ground invasion could be coming soon.

Even before the current conflict, humanitarian needs overwhelmed Lebanon. More than half of the country live in poverty. Many lack education, health care access and other basic services.

BWA reports more than 1 million people in Lebanon “face high levels of food insecurity.” Its Lebanese partner organization Thimar-LSESD receives funds from [Texas Baptist Hunger Offering](#) each year.

Saturday, Oct. 12, is BWA Women’s 2024 World Day of Prayer and [Global Worship Celebration](#). For one hour, Baptist women around the globe will join together, through [YouTube](#), at 11 a.m., Central Standard Time in North America.

Participants will pray for Lebanon and the Middle East and for other regions in need of God’s peace and presence. Additional prayers are suggested [here](#).