



Phil and Sylvie Good

Link Letter no. 19 | December 2022

Contact details:

philipgood@email.com
sylv@goodheaven.co.uk



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 friends,

Coming up to Christmas 2022 and the world still feels like it has not settled down in the least. In the course of a few years we moved from worries about Trump and Brexit to a global pandemic and just as we thought things would return to some sort of normal, the war in Ukraine broke out and it seemed like the world's supply chains caught some sort of disease. This, then, is a new world and we will have to get used to it. For us here in Lebanon, the sense of lurching from one crisis to the next was normal before but now it has just entered a higher level.

Many people here I think would say to America and Europe, "welcome to my world". Life becomes unpredictable, financial security is not guaranteed, even peace itself cannot be taken for granted. The very familiar Arabic expression *alhamdulillah*, usually abbreviated as *hamdullah*, means "praise be to God" and is often incorporated into our greetings. In an uncertain world it is good to be reminded on every meeting that "I am doing ok, praise be to God". This is our role in the uncertain world we all live in: to remind people that God is with us, and that is after all what Christmas is about.

As we reflect upon the last year we give thanks to God for the riches of the life we live. Our riches are certainly not about what we possess or where we eat. Our riches here are much more valuable than that and cannot be measured by any monetary value. This is good, they are not subject to inflation or depreciation – they truly are "riches in heaven".

Sylvie says:

I think we have been learning over the last few months more of the glory of the gospel. Not just a transaction by a wonderful God – "believe in me and I will grant you eternal life" (stunning though that is) – but also a walk into freedom, love, joy, light in the darkness, abundant life. How can Christ do so much for us? How is it possible? But a relationship with the living God creates in us a sense of wonder, energy, enthusiasm for his life and the life of his creation. Abundant life indeed.

This is what the folks here in Bourj Hammoud are finding. They have come from a place of war and darkness. They came to poverty and uncertainty in Lebanon, then they found Jesus. And all of the above!

My time is taken up with visiting vulnerable families and attempting to teach some English, which is a challenge we all enjoy, though progress is limited! Sometimes, when I listen to all their woes and worries,



Among the cedars in the mountains

Support Phil and Sylvie:
churchmissionsociety.org/good

**With Jesus
With each other
To the edges**



I feel overwhelmed and wonder what I can do to help. These last few months the chief challenge has been finding a school for the children and finding enough money to pay for it. Obviously, I can help a bit, but we can't pay for schooling for all their kids. Then there is the usual rent, electricity and numerous health problems. But pretty well always, after enumerating their problems they then say "Jesus, *hamdullah*" (*alhamdulillah*, that word again). We have Jesus.

And so, they inspire me as much as I comfort them. But this is fellowship, this is the Body of Christ. We didn't come here to bring expert tuition in Life, we came to walk alongside our brothers and sisters. Together, we enjoy the journey that Jesus has set before us.

How long we will walk together in Lebanon, we don't know. After a period of stagnation the UN is on the move again and there are rumours of families travelling to the West, and we ourselves are nearing the end of our time here, but as long as we are together, this bond of fellowship is a joy to us all.

We had a few visitors over the last couple of months. It is always a joy for us to help people navigate this land and its people. They also challenge us as we look at what we do through their eyes. We were privileged to be able to share our mission field with Alastair Bateman, CEO of CMS, Philip Mounstephen, bishop of Truro, and two managers of SAT-7 UK.

We have enjoyed having the freedom to travel with our own car and there are so many beautiful corners of Lebanon we can now access. This also allows us to be involved in the A Rocha project in the Beqaa Valley, which we are finding very stimulating. These escapes to the countryside are important as I spend hours at the computer writing and investigating funding opportunities for SAT-7 and Together Network, and Sylvie treads the narrow streets of our neighbourhood where there is little greenery and sunshine is quite far away.

What are our riches this Christmas? This year, instead of a Christmas stocking full of sweets and things, how about a stocking full of memories, of things to give thanks for, maybe some pictures of special moments in 2022. Maybe even some hard things that we are still processing. Let us put them all into our stocking on Christmas Eve and spend some time praying and sharing our stockings with our closest friends. These are the riches that don't cost anything and that no one can take away, truly riches in heaven.

Love,

Phil and Sylvie



Photos from top to bottom: The ruins of Aanjara; visiting a refugee home in the Beqaa Valley; visiting RCB church with Alastair



Going further with Church Mission Society

Stories from the edges: Find out how God is meeting people on the edges around the world through CMS people in mission. **Go to churchmissionsociety.org/stories**

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

If you would like to discuss your mailings with us or to receive this link letter on a regular basis, please email supporter.care@churchmissionsociety.org or call 01865 787400. Church Mission Society is a mission community acknowledged by the Church of England. Registered Company No. 6985330 and Registered Charity No. 1131655 (England and Wales) and SC047163 (Scotland).