



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

Greetings friends in the UK,

This morning we sang the song by Graham Kendrick:

Knowing You, Jesus, knowing You
There is no greater thing

Sylvie:

As we write this letter, we are preparing for change as we look towards the end of our time in Beirut. Seasons change, as seasons will, and it seems as though it is the season for us to return home: we now have two grandchildren, and we are getting slightly more cronkety, so time to reestablish ourselves on the home front.

Having said that, life in Beirut goes on for now. I have more and more families to visit and support, and the English lessons come and go. English is seen as greatly desirable for getting a job and many people want to learn, but like me and my bazuki (stringed musical instrument), they don't want to practise! So, progress is slow, but we have fun. It is often particularly good for the kids, as for so many weeks we haven't had school this year. There has been a teachers' strike for months, then the government won't pay for the Syrians (despite having money from the UN), then we all got shaken by the earthquake and buildings had to be inspected. So an English lesson with me provides a diversion and wakes up their brains.

Meanwhile, I am still running the creche on Sunday and will hopefully be running a small kids club in the summer, when the schools shut for four months and there is little for kids to do.

Life here is an established rhythm for the Syrian families. They have been here years now, but most won't contemplate returning to Syria, which has many dangers beside war. Sadly the economic situation is worse than Lebanon and the safety situation is poor; so many fatal accidents and disappearings. But I will find leaving them very hard – they are so open and friendly, so willing to share coffee, if you have the time to sit down and be with them. Most of their lives seem to be spent sharing coffee and chatting, and in this way Jesus gets communicated as people chat the gospel. We add our bit, in halting Arabic. Their needs are great, but I am reminded of the old hymn:

"I came to Jesus as I was, weary and worn and sad. I found in him a resting place and he has made me glad"

It is that gladness that lightens up their lives, and mine. None of us are about to leave Jesus.



The streets where our friends live.

Support Phil and Sylvie:
churchmissionsociety.org/good

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



Phil:

I have been helping with fundraising, but have now handed that over to my replacements and I have two more weeks helping A Rocha Lebanon in the search for a rare frog! Yes, it has been my delight to be involved in a project to try to find a rare frog in the Aammiq wetlands here in Lebanon.

In the UK our second grandchild, River, has been born to Alex and Nina, and we will be going back to the UK to meet him soon. Sylvie is still involved in supporting our group of Syrian refugee converts, but is planning to finish in September after spending the summer in Beirut while I work on our house in the UK, so we can move back into it in the autumn. After a season of debriefing, home assignments and visiting our supporting churches we will retire at the end of the year.

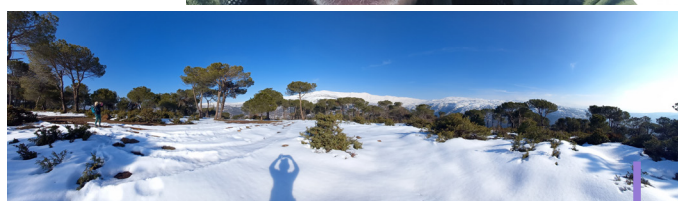
Supporting the refugees for us means something more intangible than providing blankets and food boxes – that is what people with access to resources do. Those resources are woefully inadequate, and sometimes the world cannot see anything except the appeals with empty hands and bellies of the underprivileged refugees, who just become a problem without a solution. (The only solution available seems to be “send more money”). Our Jesus calls us to see past the need for resources and look at the individual, to see the person as not a problem to be solved but a celebration of a God-given life.

For us, we have no resources except our faith in a loving God, a heavenly father who cares for us and for them. We come and we care, we don't have any solution to the problems – better people than us have tried and failed. But we have a God who cares, the scars in the hands and feet of Jesus that we remember this Easter tell us what we need to do. We come and we drink coffee, we talk and we find reasons to laugh, we pray and we sing and we dance, we celebrate birthdays and we carry on life together. The problems remain but our God, in Jesus, comes into the room with us and that is more than enough. I repeat this statement many times: our friends have suffered by becoming refugees, and they suffered again when they declared their faith in the living Lord Jesus, but they will continue to say, “It is worth it.” Philippians 3:8 says “*I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord*”; this is their claim and it is ours too.

Knowing You, Jesus, knowing You
There is no greater thing
You're my all, You're the best
You're my joy, my righteousness
And I love You, Lord

Love,

Phil and Sylvie



Photos from top to bottom: Creche at church; a training event for future leaders; walking in the snow.



Going further with Church Mission Society

Jesus never gives up. Neither should we. We live in a fractured, hurting world. It can be tempting to give up: on hope, on people, on the idea that things can ever change. Yet, Jesus invites us to follow him on a journey to the edges. Find out more at churchmissionsociety.org/nevergiveup

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

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