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by Ruth Anna Dana

student dorms. The long-term work continued, providing renovations and appliances so that some families could return to their homes for the winter. The local churches, in meeting needs, took this great opportunity to reach out with the gospel. In the renovation of homes and other structures, the goal was the “renovation of hearts.” Joe shared this verse: “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him” (Colossians 3:17, KJV).

In the fall 2021 issue of *CBM Responding*, we meet Joe and his wife Alexandra as “ambassadors” for Lebanon. The article tells of them opening their home to a CBM SENT Online cooking experience with Canadians, which gave them the opportunity to share the needs of the Lebanese people and Syrian refugees, and to report on the church and family challenges during the pandemic. Canadians not only learned the skills of preparing hummus and tabbouleh, they gained an insight into intercessory prayer.

How can you be involved in the Bridis’ ministry?

- ▣ **Pray** for the availability of health care to stigmatized and marginalized Syrian refugees. **Learn** about a local Lebanese partner, the Baptist Children and Youth Ministry, which assists low-income families needing trauma care: you can find out more at cbmin.org/baptist-children-youth-ministry/.
- ▣ **Pray** in support of ABTS graduates and for the ongoing online ministry of ABTS to students across the MENA region.
- ▣ **Pray** for this busy couple as Joe carries out his CBM duties and as Alexandra serves as the ABTS human resources and administration manager. May the Lord grant them times of rest and refreshment with their two young sons.

Sources: www.cbmin.org/; Bridi CBM ministry updates, *CBM calling* (Sept. 29, 2020), *CBM Prayerline* (Oct. 7, 2020), 2021 *Hopeful Gifts for Change Gift Catalogue*, and *CBM Responding* (Fall 2021).

JOE BRIDI was called to serve as a Canadian Baptist Ministries national field staff member in January 2019 to assist the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary (ABTS) in Beirut. He works to support ABTS’s graduates upon their return to their home countries in the Middle East and North Africa region (MENA). Joe also monitors existing projects and helps implement and support new initiatives, including those that have been created in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Lebanon is known as the country with the highest per capita population of refugees in the world. Since October 2019, Lebanon has been facing the fourth-highest inflation rate in the world, leading to serious economic and financial breakdown. With the onset of COVID-19, many businesses had to shut down and many people lost their jobs. Then on August 4, 2020, a devastating port explosion in Beirut brought about the government’s failure.

The Lebanese people work hard to live with the challenge of moving from crisis to crisis. Desperate living conditions have driven approximately 400,000 people to flee Lebanon, and this has had a domino effect, impacting Lebanon’s already declining Christian church.

Building on the heart for ministry he had before serving with CBM, it

is timely that Joe has been able to establish a solid foundation of outreach throughout the MENA region. Together with generous donors and assistance from ABTS graduates, CBM has been able to establish three far-reaching COVID-related food assistance projects to Syrian refugees in North Lebanon and people in Morocco and Sudan.

The Lebanese Society for Educational and Social Development is the parent organization of ABTS and several other educational and ministry organizations dedicated to equipping the Church and to relief and development. It coordinated relief initiatives for different churches to work together as the body of Christ after the Beirut explosion. Christians, including the Bridis, were down on the streets providing basic care and food. ABTS opened its doors to house 20 families in the

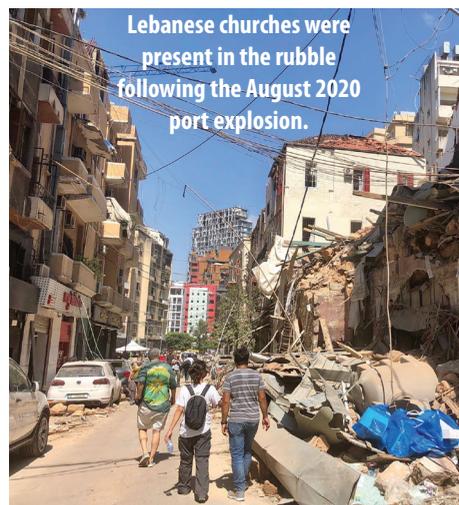


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