



## Joe Bridi

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by Ruth Anna Dana



a positive impact through her work.

In the larger view, Elie Haddad, CBM's MENA team leader and the president of ABTS, reports that the economic situation in Syria is rapidly deteriorating as well. The churches and ministries serving

in Syria are impacted. One Syrian student enrolled in the ABTS Online Certificate Ministry Program testifies of "the blessing it was to share the lessons I was learning with the people around me. This helped us grow in our knowledge of the Lord together and encouraged my ministry team so that we too could share the gospel despite all the difficulties in our lives." Furthermore, the war in Sudan has displaced the church partners there and other ABTS graduates. These refugees are finding creative ways to care for their families and share the gospel of love and peace to the hopeless and the broken.

Pray for the CBM MENA team as they develop and put into action the upcoming projects for 2024 for their partners in Egypt, Sudan, Morocco and Lebanon. The needs of the Middle East urge us to pray and to "remember ... those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering" (Hebrews 13:3, NIV).

Sources: CBM Prayerline, Bridi CBM update (March 2023), ABTS online newsletter (September 2023).

The Canadian Baptist Ministries staff serving in Lebanon describe the living situation with the word "volatile" as the country's political and economic situation continues to deteriorate. Many people are searching for answers as to why this is happening. The ministry partners of the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary (ABTS) and the Lebanese Society for Educational and Social Development who work alongside the local churches find that each crisis seems to be creating new opportunities to share the gospel. "These (trials) have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed" (1 Peter 1:7, NIV).

Joe Bridi, a Canadian Baptist Ministries national field staff member, works specifically with these local partners and the ABTS graduates in the MENA (Middle East North Africa) region to implement and evaluate all the CBM outreach projects. Born and raised

in Lebanon, Joe entered into this full-time ministry with a heart for service to the Syrian refugees in his area by leading Bible studies and discipleship groups. Believers in Lebanon are praying and acting to meet the needs of thousands of families struggling to provide the basic necessities of food, medicine, and heat during the winter months. Joe shares that "public schools are collapsing and unable to pay decent wages to the teachers." The fallout in a country suffering from uncontrollable inflation is that some children have to leave school to work to help provide for the family, domestic violence has increased due to financial stress, and some young girls from vulnerable

families are quickly married off as a solution to the inability to feed all the family. The nonformal education programs supported by CBM's partners are providing a solid base in literacy and numeracy. The Christian values and ethics assure the children of God's love and provide a safe place for them. More and more children are able to benefit from these centres and catch up on the years of missed education.

An update from the Bridi family communicates that their two young sons are settled in school during these challenging times. Joe's wife Alexandra has been working with Youth for Christ as a human resources adviser. She is happy to be making



Unsplash Marten Bjork (city scenes)

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