

How has mission changed in Lebanon?



There is no doubt that opportunities exist for continuing what was begun nearly 150 years ago. Expectations and methodology may have changed as culture, economic and political situations change. However, what has not changed is the reason MECO continues to serve in the Middle East! Men, women, boys and girls from all backgrounds are without Christ.



Peter served for many years with MECO teaching in schools and developing important relationships within the community.

Much of MECO's ministry in Lebanon was disrupted by the Civil War (1975-1990). The historic links forged over the previous 120 years or so became distant memories as many missionaries moved on or retired. New personnel did not find a conflict zone either inviting or attractive.

At the end of the Civil War, great divisions remained in Lebanese society, however, it ushered in a period of greater opportunities for economic and political stability. With much prayer and support from around the world, a mission presence was maintained throughout that turbulent

period, and with the 'peace' came new, exciting opportunities. MECO workers were able to work with local believers to both enhance the surviving ministries and develop new ones.

"The challenge of the future is great and exciting."

Ministries reestablished

The school in a mountain village was re-opened in 1998 in newly built facilities. It continues the original vision of reaching the local community. MECO's presence was reestablished in the south in 2003 and this led to the current team now serving there. At an administration level, MECO consolidated links with the Lebanese

Evangelical Society (LES), which oversees the work of the schools and other related ministries. MECO works in fellowship with these church leaders, sitting on the Executive Committee and continuing to have a voice at their General Assembly.

There is much to be done

The challenge of the future is great and exciting. Much remains to be done both within the schools and in the communities. Over recent years short-term involvement - one or two year placements - has been a very practical answer to both the needs of the schools and to those who would find long term commitment difficult or daunting. Such people contribute greatly to the continuance of the ministry. Summer Schools (two - four weeks of daily activities for young people) are a useful tool for attracting young people from home countries to volunteer, and are a blessing to the team and the communities they serve.

To bring the gospel of Christ to the people of Lebanon and the Middle East was, is and continues to be MECO's main purpose. Many have stood faithfully in prayer and giving over the years. The need for partnership with God's people is as great as ever it was. Without total dependence on God, the work of mission is futile.

Pray that God will continue to work through His servants. Give that the work will be enabled. And if possible come either for a short informative visit or as a volunteer. God is at work in the Middle East and He calls us into partnership with Him. **m**



Busy streets signal growth



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