

Beirut 16/11/2020

Dear Leaders, Brothers and Sisters.

Peace and Grace in the Name of our precious Lord.

I am sure you follow some news from Lebanon, yet I feel the urge to write a short update on the present situation and the ministry in God's Kingdom.

A year had passed since the revolution started on the 17th of October. It looks as if the light of change has been extinguished. No one understands the structure of this country where no change may take place in politics and in the people who have been in power since five decades. The story repeats itself as a new prime minister has been nominated by the parliamentarians, and no cabinet is formed as a result of complications amongst the different parties that represent the various religions and confessions in the country. The parties that represent the religious confessions work against each other leading to deep divisions. The economy is getting worse, while Lebanon has not been able to pay his debts that are over 140 Billion Dollars. The present rate of the Dollar is around 7500 Lebanese Lira, in comparison to the official bank price which is 1500 Lira. The capital control practiced by the banks follows no guidelines and changes from day to day. No one is allowed to withdraw from his bank account any foreign currency and there are even limits to withdraw from the Lebanese personal accounts.

The explosion on the 4th of August has damaged one third of the capital Beirut. Few houses and shops are being repaired, and few people have received compensation, whereas more than 300 Thousand people have been displaced and live in schools and stay with relatives. Few houses were repaired from donations offered by NGOs. The Lebanese Army has started distribution of some funds given by foreign agencies to cover part of the cost of repairs in the severely damaged area.

As you may know, we are taking part in helping some families with their repairs' expenses. We have also offered some schools help to repair few classes of what has been damaged. It is estimated that more than 130 schools were damaged.

As for our church building repairs, we are still in the process and it is taking a lot of time. We have completed part of the repairs in the sanctuary and the offices. The benches still need 3 weeks to be delivered and the sound system awaits the repair of the wall paper. The wooden ground has been completed last week.

On the upper floors, we have finished the installation of window frames with the glass. The metal frames still need to be painted, as well as most rooms in the building. The main gates for each floor must also be exchanged. Most curtains were torn apart and need to be replaced, at a time when the second lockdown has been announced starting Saturday the 14th for a period of two weeks. All shops are closed during this period.

However, we continue to serve our people with the Gospel in various ways. We are thankful to those who have donated money to purchase food and hygiene material. We serve poor families and those whose salaries have lost their value to the market price of the Dollar. This ministry continues with Hundred Lebanese families and another Hundred Syrian families. This ministry allows us to show God's love through practical Christian ministry. Our Sunday services continued without interruption for the past 6 months, and we used the social media when we had lock down in the country.

These are challenging times for us as we face different problems on daily basis, from reduced health care offered by the hospitals as a result of the Corona pandemic and the vanishing of medicines in the market, to our currency value, the political chaos, and the loss of hope in the future of the country. We know that our Lord is on the throne and we have all our hope in Him, thus we ask you to keep praying for the church in Lebanon, that God may be manifested in our ministry.

May the Lord bless you abundantly,

Joy Mallouh
Church of God Pastor
Chairman of the General Assembly