

W5 on Missions



Who? Elie & Mireille Haddad

The Haddads immigrated to Canada from Lebanon in 1990. Mireille has a degree in Interior Design and training in Computer Graphics. Elie was a senior technical consultant in the field of Information Technology for 15 years. He has a Master of Theological Studies and is a PhD candidate at the International Baptist Theological Seminary in Amsterdam.

When?

The Haddads joined CBM Global Field Staff in July 2005.

Where? Lebanon

Lebanon is a country along the Mediterranean Sea and is bordered by Syria to the north and east and Israel to the south. Its capital city is Beirut.

What?

Elie is the President and a lecturer of the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary (ABTS), which equips leaders for the Church in the Arab world. The mission of ABTS is: "to serve the Church in our region as it realizes its Biblical mission of having Christ acknowledged as Lord by offering specialized learning resources and equipping faithful men and women for effective service." (www.abtslebanon.org) Elie comments:

"In response to the growing challenges of ministry in the Middle East and North Africa, God is preparing new generations of leaders who can face these challenges and are equipped to engage their communities with the powerful message of the Gospel. God continues to send us - at the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary - strategic leaders to be equipped to go back to serve their churches. Our students this year come from Morocco, Algeria, South Sudan, Sudan, Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Palestine, and Lebanon. We are grateful for the amazing leaders that God is entrusting us to equip." (Haddads in Lebanon Ministry Update, December 2014)

Here is one example of the ministry of ABTS students: "My husband, myself and several ABTS students were invited to join a ministry in a village in the Bekaa Valley, with the organization Bridges of Love. We all travel there twice a month. We put on activities for 160 kids from the Syrian refugee camps and for Bedouin children, and explore stories of biblical prophets. We joined this ministry three months ago and have been receiving great feedback from the kids. We ask for your prayers for the safety of our team as they travel to distant locations. We also ask for prayers that we can continue with our commitment to this program, as it's hard for us to

leave our families every two weeks. Additionally we ask for prayer as we seek to show love and solidarity to the children's families." (ABTS Newsletter, December 2014)

Mireille is actively involved in ministry to Iraqi and Syrian refugees. "The Iraqi women that Mireille is serving are becoming more interested in learning God's Word. They believe that their displacement to Lebanon gave them the opportunity to think more about God and to get to know Him better. They feel grateful and encouraged that they held to their faith under persecution. They are learning what the words of Jesus meant when He said: 'blessed are you when people assault you, persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad because great is your reward in heaven.' These verses bring comfort and peace to these families who have left homes, jobs, and their own country because they were persecuted for being Christian." (Haddads in Lebanon Ministry Update, December 2014)

Why?

"Life in Lebanon is becoming more difficult by the day. There are four million Lebanese currently living in Lebanon, and the refugee population inside Lebanon has increased to two million. The stresses on our economy and on our already broken infrastructure are debilitating. Add to that the security breaches that are occurring occasionally. There have been many attempts to bring the regional conflict into Lebanon. Life in our neighboring countries is even more difficult. With the onslaught of the radical extremists in Syria and Iraq, numerous communities are being threatened every day. Life in our region is anything but normal."

So, is this the time to run away from the region? Absolutely not. In the middle of this confusion, opportunities to serve and to proclaim the Gospel are emerging every day. The Church is discovering its role as an agent of peace and reconciliation. It is discovering its priestly and prophetic roles as it brings the presence of God to a spiritually destitute place. Incredible things are happening because of that. Our churches are being transformed into vibrant and bold witnesses of the Gospel, in word and deed; and the displaced communities are being transformed as they experience first-hand, many for the first time, the love of God through His people.

No, this is not the time to run away. This is the time to invest in the work of the Kingdom in a very critical place at a very critical time. God is actively redeeming people in numbers and from backgrounds that we never thought possible. It is such a privilege to be in the middle of what God is doing in our region at this time." (Haddads in Lebanon Ministry Update, December 2014)

Lisa Lohnes

Corresponding Secretary for UBWMU/ABW