

“When anxiety was great within me, your consolation brought me joy.”

Psalm 94:19

Strain and Stress, Day by Day

Yesterday morning, after we told acquaintance here that we had left the United States to live and work in Lebanon, he told us bluntly, “You made a big mistake. Are there churches in America that you came here? This country will not straighten out. Not for long time.” Later, we told another couple the exact same thing. Their reaction was the opposite. “What? You moved to Beirut? This is wonderful news! You have put our minds at ease.”



NISHAN AND MARIA
BAKALIAN

In these expressions are echoes of the worries that each person bears each and every day. They worry about things that are beyond their control, such as the ongoing impasse within the government, and the resultant inability to provide the normal services citizens of any country should enjoy. Things such as reliable electricity, clean drinking water, proper waste management, a public health plan, enforcement of building codes, reliable Internet access, stopping the destruction of the natural environment, and the swirl of political intrigue blowing in from East and West. As we live beside them and try to encourage them, we hear the despair in people’s tone of voice and see it in their eyes. This daily grind robs them of the energy they need to face each day.

Added to these strains are the stresses on the country in hosting so many refugees (about 2 million of them, in a country of 4 million), registered and not, and the effect this has on young people trying to plan a future inside Lebanon. The unreasonably high cost of living means that families inevitably face the anguish of sending their children to other countries to get higher education, or to find legal employment.

We pray that God enables us to be good listeners without being overwhelmed; that God makes us wise; that we act as partners and mission co-workers, knowing that we have this ministry through the mercy of God. We know that the freedom we have in Christ will enable us to continue to labor joyfully in this field, no matter the circumstances.

Nishan and Maria Bakalian serve with the Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East (UAECNE). Their appointment is made possible by your gifts to Disciples Mission Fund, Our Church’s Wider Mission, and your special gifts.

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