

August 28, 2024

Dear Friends,

In our twenty or so years of mission service, we've seen that, sooner or later, the problems of a particular place where we serve can affect us. The issues were different in Egypt and Zambia, but at times we were impacted. Lebanon faces instability and disruption caused by groups and nations who fail to work together and make peace. Wars move people around. We're currently facing that reality, even as we faced it last October.

Tomorrow, as planned, we are flying to Beirut after having spent seven weeks this summer in the USA. We realize there is a slight level of risk in going back. But our seminary is having its faculty retreat next week, which was cancelled last October due to war, and it seems right for me (Dustin) to be present. Sherri and I should also be able to renew our residence permits, which are due.

However, because of war and instability, and concerns about safety for Americans, the U.S. State Department has designated Lebanon as "Level 4 – Do Not Travel". This places it among countries the U.S. government says Americans should see as off limits at the present time. We have discerned that we should not be living full-time in Lebanon right now, so have decided, following a week of some key in-person activities in Lebanon, to leave temporarily and establish ourselves for a while in Amman, Jordan. It's only 150 miles away as the crow flies, but Jordan is a stable and safe country, and an oasis of refuge for many. We can keep doing almost all of the work we normally do in Lebanon. The seminary is accustomed to some of its core faculty and most of its students living outside the country. Jordan is also very suitable for continuing to improve our Arabic.

We've taken inspiration from passages of Scripture saying that God's sheep hear the Shepherd's voice, and that God will instruct us and teach us in the way we should go. We trust this is the case. We pray it will be true in your life also.



Sheep being guided by their shepherd on a hillside near our seminary, just outside Beirut.

We would very much appreciate your prayers...

1. For our ongoing sensitivity to God's voice and direction, and for wisdom for the seminary's leadership team as well, as it faces making lots of difficult decisions at the start of a new school year. As a whole, ABTS is deciding to forge ahead; it's good at that! May our decisions turn out for the advance of the gospel.
2. For God's protection on us and our family members until we all meet again, and for God's peace and rest in our minds, hearts, and bodies.

3. For the Middle East region, that all parties would take real steps toward peace, toward understanding “the other”, and toward not resorting to violence to get their way. Let’s look toward that day.

Thank you so much, all of you, for your prayers. We also invite you to consider giving to continue to make possible our life and service in the Middle East. We have some extra expenses due to our temporary relocation to Amman, Jordan. You may give by clicking [here](#).

We’re also thankful to be wrapping up some meaningful ventures, including Sherri completing a preaching course she’s been taking this summer and Dustin finishing teaching a course on 1 Corinthians to students from Morocco, Egypt, Syria, and Lebanon.

May God’s grace and peace be upon you all! We appreciate your prayers, care, and support.

In Christ,  
Dustin (and Sherri)  
ellingtondustin@gmail.com -- Dustin  
so.ellington@gmail.com -- Sherri



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