



Arthur and Louise Brown

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Prayer Letter July 2009

Dear friends,

Thank you for your faithful support for our family and ministry over the past year. We have really appreciated it, as our life has been full of highs and lows. Knowing that we have been prayed for in the middle of it all has meant so much.

The last few months in Lebanon have been tense to say the least. Sunday 7 June saw parliamentary elections that pitted the Western-backed government against the opposition coalition led by Hezbollah and other parties supported by Syria and Iran. In many ways the results of the election are significant not only for the forming of a new government, but, to a degree, for the identity of Lebanon, a land known for its religious and political diversity, and yet a land marred with conflict and sectarian division. The fear of a return to civil conflict has been obvious for many Lebanese, including many of our Muslim and Christian friends, those who support the government, and those who support the opposition. What has been particularly key in these elections is the fact that it is 'the Christian vote' that has been so divided.

As you may know the opposition did not do as well as had been expected, meaning that the pro-Western coalition will be forming a government, albeit, by necessity, a 'unity government' made up of the various factions. The coming days will be interesting, as we see how people respond to the results. Again, we pray for calm and peace, in a country where division so easily spills into violence. As is typical gun fire and firework kept us awake into the night as people celebrated their particular's success.

Since our last prayer letter, Louise's place of work, INMA, has been through a time of real testing. Back in March the director, Rob, was in a horrific car accident in Jordan. It is a miracle that his life was spared. Since then he has undergone three major surgical procedures on his face and left leg. He has recently just left hospital but still has



many months of physiotherapy to undergo. This has left the organisation without its director and his wife for the last three months. At the same time another member of staff had to leave the country because her visa expired and she has still to be granted permission to return. Thus Louise returned back to work, taking Jack with her, to support the staff who are working so hard to maintain all the programmes. Jack's happy personality and love of cuddles from everybody has acted as a ray of sunshine in our office. Yet in the next two weeks Louise and the last remaining foreign staff member leave for home assignment. Please pray for the staff left behind in difficult circumstances.

Thanks to the generosity of one of our Link Up churches, who raised over £2,000 from their Christmas appeal, Louise has been able to co-ordinate a project to supply milk to 423 children between the age of three to five each week in Bourje, Barajneh Palestinian Camp. This has been part of a wider sports and health project, run across eight pre-schools in the camp. It has been really well received



by both the children and the staff at the schools. It has provided some much-needed nutrition to children who lack this normally.

Arthur has been very busy writing and editing recently. He has been working on the editing of the first Lebanese youth ministry book written in both Arabic and English by local youth leaders. It has been a huge but very significant project with both Lebanese and foreign contributors to the book. Hopefully this will be published later this year. The next few weeks will also see the publication of Arthur's first Grove publication called *Taking risks, young people and risk taking behaviour*. This will be available in the UK from www.grovebooks.co.uk. His DMin. is also progressing well. He has completed all his assignment and is about to embark on the dissertation phase. He hopes to explore youth ministry within Islamic contexts, a subject relevant for churches in the UK as well.

Looking forward to the next semester Arthur is preparing for teaching two new courses. He is also in the process of preparing for next year's Middle East Conference which is run by the Institute of Middle East Studies at ABTS. The Annual conference focuses on Christian Muslim / East-West relations. This year's conference will focus on Women and Islam. The 2010 conference will focus on young people and Arthur will be taking a lead in its preparation and delivery. The next academic year promises to be very busy, but exciting.

The children are doing really well. The girls are looking forward to our home assignment and catching up with friends and family. I am looking forward to taking them to the park and we are all dreaming of eating pork sausages again. Jack swam for the first time today and his smile is enough to melt the hardest heart. Naomi is very proud of her smile as yesterday she lost her first tooth and woke up today to discover that she had been visited by the tooth fairy. Jessica has become a bookworm over the last few months and loves just to curl up with a good book.

We return to the UK on 22 June and stay until 18 September. For much of the time we will be based at one of the BMS houses in Eltham, south east London.

Arthur and Louise

For the prayers among you:

Give thanks to God for:

- ◆ Rob's (INMA director) steady recovery
- ◆ The peace that seems to be holding in Lebanon
- ◆ The milk project

Please pray for:

- ◆ Students graduating this year from ABTS and returning to their home countries in the Middle East and North Africa to serve God in exciting ways.
- ◆ INMA: that God will protect it in the coming year.
- ◆ Our home assignment: for safety as we travel around the UK, and for the opportunities we will have to share what God has been doing in Lebanon. That people will be inspired to join in his mission, wherever they live.
- ◆ For peace and harmony to take hold in Lebanon.

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