

Prayer Letter

ME Earthquake

10<sup>th</sup> of February 2023



## The Earthquake

On the 6<sup>th</sup> of February 2023, we woke up in Lebanon, at 3:30 AM with our houses shaking. A terrible earthquake with a magnitude of 7.8 hit Turkey, and it affected the northern part of Syria, Lebanon felt it very strongly as well. Then aftershocks in addition to other earthquakes kept hitting the region at a very fast pace one after the other, professionals say that lots of other earthquakes are still to hit the region, and only God knows which area will be next.

Figure 1: Destruction in Syria



## What is Happening to the People

In Syria tens of thousands of people have been strongly affected by this earthquake, thousands were killed, and thousands were injured. The area that the earthquake hit, is a very cold area with lots of rain, snow, and very low temperature. People are traumatized, and they have no ability to do anything because of the sanctions, the siege, and the poor situation that they have already been in due to 12 years of war. The war has had a big effect on the houses of these people because they have been hit hard before the earthquakes came which made them very fragile to such an earthquake. Thousands of people have fled their homes because they might fall at any time and have been sleeping in the streets, in their cars if they have one, and at other people's houses who had warm hearts to welcome other people even though they do not know if they would be the ones to flee next.

People haven't slept for almost a week now, they have lost hope because problems seem to pile up and increase every morning. The good thing is that people have lots of questions and are seeking God. It is also nice to see how some people are merciful and how they unite in such times instead of fighting.

## Afrin

In Syria, two of our churches have been affected. First of all, the Kurdish church in Afrin has been deeply affected, the people lost lots of their houses, and we lost a family of 5 from our congregation, they all died in their house before they could flee. Lots of people have been sleeping for days in the cold. The problem is that Afrin is not controlled by Syria, yet it is part of Syria. The Turks who are concurring Afrin are busy with their own problems, and the Syrian government is busy with the territories that are directly under their rule. So Afrin is getting no help.

## Latakia

In Latakia, there were no losses in our congregation, yet some houses of the brethren are in a very bad condition, which forced them to flee the houses.

## Aleppo

In Aleppo, we do not have a church. Yet we have been working with a person who is a believer for a period of time now to see if we can start a church plant there. We think that with this crisis it is the right time to start working and to start reaching the people helping them physically, financially, and most importantly spiritually.



*Figure 2: Destruction in Syria*

## Lebanon and Homs and Damascus

In Aleppo, we do not have a church. Yet we have been working with a person who is a believer for a period of time now to see if we can start a church plant there. We think that with this crisis it is the right time to start working and to start reaching the people helping them physically, financially, and most importantly

spiritually. on the 9<sup>th</sup> of February, a smaller earthquake hit the Northeastern part of Lebanon that borders Homs. The first village that is on the border is Qusayr where we started a new church plant a few years ago. The house of Rafed our pastor there was affected and the roof started to leak water, he had to flee the house and go to his parent's house. In Lebanon, an area called Tripoli was highly affected because it is a poor area, and the buildings are very delicate and old. Another area that was highly affected because of this earthquake was Nabaa and Burj Hammoud area. This area is where most of the Syrian refugees live in Beirut. This area has been built in an unprofessional way, it is also very old and its buildings have lots of cracks because of the civil war that took place in Lebanon, so lots of people spent the night sleeping at the parking of a mall. In Damascus, one building fell because of this same earthquake. One of the members of our congregation lost his cousin in this building. Shant our pastor in Damascus had to flee his house because the building next to where he lives is in danger of falling down.

### Prayer Requests

- 1- Pray for God's protection of our pastors, congregation and all the people in the affected areas.
- 2- Pray that we would be able to provide help for the people in all the areas mentioned above
- 3- Pray that we can help fix houses that need to be fixed in order for them not to fall down
- 4- Pray for the new church plant that we are planning to start in Aleppo

***2 Thessalonians 3:3 But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one.***

