

Living in times of crisis in Lebanon

Many feelings come to my mind while thinking of the current situation we are living in Lebanon; and when saying current I mean the last three years. Things escalated in a way that we could not handle or understand anymore; even worse: we have adapted to any new challenge prior to its existence.

Lebanese people are good in making jokes; we joke about the economic situation, laugh and then feel sorry for ourselves.

Statistics say more than 60% of the Lebanese now are unemployed; it is not about the Lebanese anymore when we talk about Lebanon; this country embraces many nationalities: Syrians, Africans, Arabs, European, Americans, etc. all of those had either to leave the country or to adapt. Adapting kills the zeal to make changes!

Covid-19 made things bad and hospitals could not handle all the cases. Many died because of lack of medication and healthy treatment.

When taking a cab, I chat with the driver and ask about his situation... those sad eyes for elders still having to work to earn their daily bread hurts my heart. I, along with many friends from abroad, distribute food bags (empty boxes are expensive now). One cannot imagine those sad destroyed bodies dragging themselves to the distribution place, shoulders down, no clear emotions on their faces: should they be happy because they could afford some meals to their families, or feel the burden of having to ask for help. Medicines disappeared, because owners hid them waiting for the dollar on the black market to raise so that they would benefit more. What would you tell a mom who is desperately searching for milk for help baby? Even that disappeared because of greedy people.

Fuel is one of the most current problems, hardly to find and expensive, while salaries are still the same and very low! Yet, people still have to attend at their work or else they will lose their jobs. Many hospitals had to close because electricity is almost impossible in many areas. Living such dilemma makes youth and families consider immigrating and hate their own country, while our politicians are busy blaming each other for the current situation. More than 4000 persons apply for passports daily, thinking that they might have the chance to leave and be safe.

Whom to be blamed? Is answering this question going to bring solutions? No. we cannot fight negativity with negativity. We need initiatives! We have discovered that we import more than we manufacture; we inhale more than we exhale! We take more than we give. This needs to change.

While hardly have 2-3 hours of electricity or internet, we should think of how to make our own electricity rather than making our debts worse buying fuel for that. Zahle is a city in the midst of Lebanon that makes its own electricity, we need to learn from it. But our politicians find no materialistic benefit from that, so they do not support such initiatives. We need organizations from around the world to help in this.

We need to encourage agriculture and support farmers in growing. We need to start seeking those small projects and help them grow.

When I started as a director of Blessed School, I said I will not depend on donations to continue; I should make use of the talents of those students with special needs and grow. This is what happened, we have now many workshops: carpentry, mosaic, catering, beads, paintings, cane baskets, etc. we do not have a lot of money, but with what we have we are bringing good income, and when we grow, we will spread more. I believe in business, because I believe in humanity.

Why I am talking to you now? I am talking because of humanity and God's love to human beings. I am seeking changing the forms of donations into growing businesses in the Arab and African countries. Many initiatives are happening, but they are still small in regards to the number of dialogues that are taking place around the world.

We do not want conferences about who is poor and how poor they are; we want actions that allow they countries grow, despite challenges. I believe that our churches are helping a lot, but we need more initiatives that help them allow people work and earn their own income and dignity.

I believe that with your hands joined together, we can grow many new initiatives that help Lebanon and other countries overcome these challenges and reach a decent human life as they deserve and have such right.

Lots of thanks and love for listening and understanding.

Truly

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