



Dear Friends,

Living under "ceasefire" isn't the same as peace. Sadly while things have been quieter in our city, the violence and destruction still continues in other parts of the country. This creates a challenging situation where people are attempting to carry on life as normal, while many things are not normal. The part of life we feel this most strongly is Andrew's football. Because so many of the clubs and players come from the most heavily affected parts of the country the league has been unable to restart since pausing at the end of February. Overnight Andrew went from coaching with two mens teams (8-10 sessions a week plus 2 games) to nothing official to do. Never one to sit still for very long, he quickly pivoted to try and make use of the newly available time. It's been good to be able to attend lots more church activities. More significant however has been the opportunity to spend time developing relationships through smaller group trainings and catch ups over coffee and meals. Whilst continuing to connect regularly through WhatsApp with all the players in both squads. This has been an amazing unexpected blessing of this situation but has also been a huge challenge. It has taken a lot of energy to keep creating things from nothing each day and has had a huge impact on our finances. Last year we set more modest support raising goals expecting that Andrew would be earning small amounts of income from the teams he coaches. Since the war started clubs have stopped paying salaries and Andrew and most of the players that he is working with haven't been paid in months. We've also been funding the traveling to visit players and the costs of working with small groups ourselves. It's a simple service we can give to those who are going through a lot right now. This is on top of the rapidly rising costs of fuel and food that we know you are all facing as well. If you feel able and led to help contribute financially to help keep us serving here sustainably please let us know.

The boys have been able to keep on with a very normal life, going to school and going out with their friends. Jem is now in the last few weeks of Grade 12. He presented his final project - a coffee table book about football in the country and the way it both exemplifies and offers the possibility to transcend deeply entrenched sectarian divides. Now he just has final exams, graduation and prom. We would love you to pray for a deeply joyful last month

in the midst of all his anxiety about the future. Pray also for Mac and Tad as they face the reality of farewelling their brother later in the year.

Bec has been grateful for a slightly quieter month on the crisis front but there is still much to manage. In the country she visited at the end of February we have now welcomed 7 new adults and 5 kids in the past year (of 5 nationalities) while farewelling much loved leaders who have served for around 30 years in the region. Those leaders reflected on the strangeness of God's timing bringing new people after so much prayer just as they were leaving but Bec commented that God just knew it would take 7 people to fill the huge hole they leave. Pray for them as they transition and keep encouraging local believers and supporting the publishing and development they established from afar. Pray for these new workers learning language and discerning how God might use their professional skills.

As the weather warms up and the possibilities of summer are before us, please pray for lasting peace and a real cessation of violence. Pray for wisdom and energy as we think about how to use the long summer well to keep shining light.

With love
Andrew and Bec



PRAY

- For Andrew to have the right words to share with people during this period of intense uncertainty.
- That good decisions will be made about sport in the country in a way that is fair and compassionate and that people wouldn't take advantage of the instability for personal gain.
- For energy to keep making things happen each day.
- Thank God for all the work Jem has put into his final year and pray good endings.
- For wisdom as we make plans for the summer and how to use the time well for our whole family.
- For wisdom about medium term decisions amidst the current uncertainty.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

If you are able to give to support the work we are doing to reach communities where he is least known across the Middle East please get in contact. Regular, ongoing giving enables us to invest in developing long-term relationships. It will make it possible for us to support more than 50 workers across the Middle East, build sustainable models and thrive as a family in a difficult location.

Email us for a giving link.

For more information, if you would like to give through an office outside Australia or for any questions please email us at andrewandbec@outlook.com or contact the Australian Partner Relations Team on 1300 746 580

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