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Biennial, Blueberries, and One More Bridge to Cross



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SUPPORT PLEDGED



EUROPE, THE MIDDLE EAST AND LIBERIA

A few days after the ABC Biennial (Mission Summit) was over, I found myself in the middle of a blueberry patch. I never picked blueberries before and so when my friends in Kansas City invited me to go, I wholeheartedly accepted.

"What's the trick to picking blueberries, Michael?" I asked their four year old son. "Look for big blue ones!" he said.

As I was picking big blueberries, I thought of the Scripture "the harvest is plentiful but the workers are few" (Luke 10:2). I thought about how a farmer once cleared this land and prepared it to plant. I thought of how the rain and irrigation would water it. Someone else would have to come check the fields to make sure the time is just right to pick. I had fun picking blueberries under the hot muggy sun for just a few minutes, but I was reminded that many are involved to come pick and harvest food—not as a fun family outing, but as part of their livelihood.

Being at the ABC Biennial showed me a glimpse of God's greater work in our denomination's family. I had the chance to dine and get reacquainted with the Asian Alliance and learn more of our heart for justice at the Baptist Peace Fellowship breakfast. I caught up with a number of pastors whose churches I visited this past year. I've met folks who have visited Lebanon or have hosted our other IM global servants in Lebanon, [Dan and Sarah Chetti](#), in their churches and homes.

And of course I got to embrace and share time with my fellow IM friends, colleagues and staff who laugh, cry, and spur each other on in service unto the Lord.

God's work that He has invited us to be a part of at home and abroad is expansive and energizing. The Biennial was a time to share and celebrate all that God has done and to challenge ourselves to look beyond towards the new ways God is calling us forth to be about His work.

In the middle of a field of blueberries, I thought about the new places God is calling us to be His hands and feet. I thought about the little seed—the call God planted in my life long ago to be a blessing to the nations. Since then, that dream has been gently watered and has grown roots into plans to bring peace alongside our brothers and sisters in the Middle East to those in their midst who have had to flee conflict and yearn for home. This is my contribution to our American Baptist family within the greater Body of Christ, and I hope that with the first hand experiences I will have, I can encourage us to draw close to experience God's harvest in that part of the world.

Do you believe that God is at work in the Middle East? Do you believe that He calls His Beloved children to be His hands and feet to those who are victims of war and without peace? Can we trust and have hope that God is sovereign over all the news we hear, the reasons why there is conflict, and over all we do not understand?

If so, I invite you to be a part of this journey with prayer support and financial gifts if you haven't done so already. In order to be able to start language classes in Beirut **THIS FALL**, I need just 125 supporters at \$22/month. If you or your church have been "on the fence" with a commitment to give regularly, now is the time to start.

Through the Matching Campaign this spring, God has provided for ALL of the one-time pre-field expenses I have. Most global servants have to raise these funds, which are used for pre-field training, travel and moving expenses to the field, and a ministry vehicle, in addition to ongoing personalized support. The last bridge for me to cross before being able to apply

for my visa and depart for the field is reaching 100% of my personalized goal with regular, ongoing gifts—be they monthly, quarterly, or yearly.

I'm grateful for all of you who have committed to make "crossing" possible. God carries me across that last bridge and onto Beirut through your prayer and gifts with His Spirit.

One day, we will dine with many who came to know Christ through our prayers and financial gifts that support global servants who GO—crossed international and cultural barriers for the sake of the Gospel. Perhaps we will eat blueberry pie at that Heavenly table! We will be able to fully embrace all that God invites us into at that Feast—a feast not just for American Baptists or Christians in America, but for all.