

**JOURNALS** POSTED ON MARCH 10, 2019

## Love Your "Enemy"





MYLINDA BAITS



SUPPORT PLEDGED



GLOBAL

*“Here is a simple rule of thumb for behavior: Ask yourself what you want people to do for you; then grab the initiative and do it for them! If you only love the lovable, do you expect a pat on the back? Run-of-the-mill sinners do that. If you only help those who help you, do you expect a medal? Garden-variety sinners do that. If you only give for what you hope to get out of it, do you think that’s charity? The stingiest of pawnbrokers does that.*



*I tell you, love your enemies. Help and give without expecting a return. You’ll never—I promise—regret it. Live out this God-created identity the way our God lives toward us, generously and graciously, even when we’re at our worst. God is kind; you be kind.”- Luke 6:31-36*

*“When I hurt you, I hurt me. When I push you, I push me. When I curse you, I curse me. When I kill you, I kill me. There is no other, there’s only us, on this trembling tender earth.”-The Many*

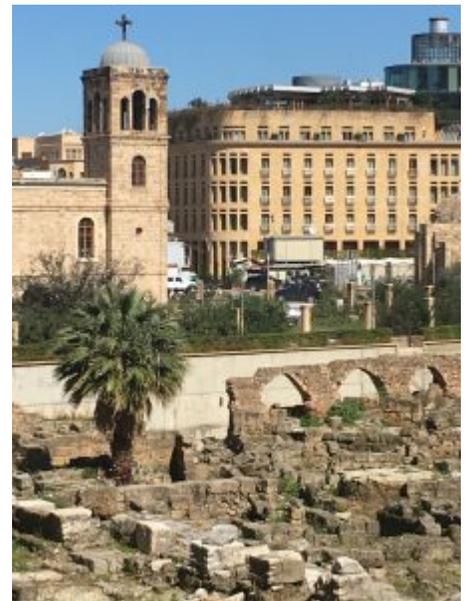
*“When I look into the face of my enemy, I see my brother.”-The Brilliance*

I recently returned from a beautiful trip to Beirut, Lebanon. Together with my fellow Global Consultant colleagues and executive staff leaders with International Ministries, I listened, learned and left changed. The smell of garlic potatoes and roasted lamb kabobs, the taste of fresh hummus and Indian biryani, the sound of church bells and

Islamic calls to prayer, the sight of aqua sea background to ancient and newly hewn stone buildings, and the touch of co-worker's hands on my head and shoulders during prayer seeped into my soul and stay with me. I am grateful for all of these things, but what most moved me was how I saw the words of Jesus that you can read in Luke's Gospel lived out by our Baptist partners in Lebanon.



Still marked by emotional scars of the violence of civil war and political unrest, I met Christians who through hospitality, compassion and service have found forgiveness, reconciliation and relationship with their former enemy neighbors. Remembering how as a child he lost many friends to sniper fire, Toni, the chaplain at the Beirut Baptist School, told us how he now sees God's call to serve his mostly Muslim background students as a holy response to his own saved life. Our partners at the Lebanese Society for Educational & Social Development shared how their relief work among refugee communities, as well as their peace



building initiatives, enable them to forge valuable relationships based on respect and trust between people of different faiths, ethnic groups, and nationalities. They firmly believe that dialogue with "the other" is the only way forward in a region torn by years of war and conflict. By getting close, regardless of past harms committed, our friends reminded me again of the power of intentional bridge-building. When I move in instead of away, I get close enough to the "other" to see their face, hear their story and recognize them as family. I hope to practice more of this transforming kindness like I've witnessed in my new Lebanese friends.

I head out for Cuba this weekend to work with my friends there as we offer psychosocial and spiritual support to emergency first responders as well as family members of some of the victims of a plane crash that occurred last May just outside of Havana. Please lift us all up in your prayers. I'll send an update once I'm back.



For your love and support, I am deeply grateful,

My linda

