

**LATEST NEWS # 358, July 24, 2006**

**The following news concerns Lebanon.**

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## **Bible Society prepares relief packages for thousands of displaced families in Beirut**

**LEBANON** — From Beirut, under siege by air from Israeli forces, Mike Bassous, General Secretary of the Bible Society in Lebanon, has said that, “The situation is quite disturbing, and we can only see one way out – through prayer.”

He said that although the staff of the Bible Society were safe and well, about six staff families had had to relocate to safer, quieter areas.

“We are convening every day from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m to do some internal work and are spending time in prayer and mutual encouragement,” he added. “Our bookshops and centres are opening for a couple of hours daily.”

He said the staff were “moved and encouraged” by the large number of calls and e-mails they were receiving.

With some 700,000 displaced people living in schools, compounds and convents in the relatively calm northern part of Lebanon, the Bible Society is currently working on preparing relief packages to distribute.

Mr Bassous described the Beirut Baptist School, where some 450 people were being housed, sleeping on classroom floors and eating whatever gifts of food people brought them.

“There are hundreds of similar schools housing thousands of displaced people,” he explained. “Our plan is to prepare 2,000 relief packages of food, basic medicines and blankets. We will also be providing some Scripture materials, to keep the people preoccupied with some comforting reading, and colouring books of Gospel stories for the children. The cost of each package will be around US \$20. All the contents must be purchased locally because of the siege. Our team is planning to do the distribution, going from school compound to another, providing a relief package for every family.”

United Bible Societies (UBS) has announced a special project, worth US \$20,000, covering half the cost of the distribution. Mr Bassous confirmed that the other half was expected to come from sources outside UBS.

He thanked the Fellowship for their continuing prayers. “We would appreciate any kind of help,” he added. (325 words – LEBANON.24.07.06)

**Anyone who wishes to contribute to special project 80529 should contact John Poole, World Service Program Accounts Manager, at the UBS World Service Center ([jpoole@ubs-wsc.org](mailto:jpoole@ubs-wsc.org)).**

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