



HDI Rank 83rd/182. **Public debt** 160% of GDP. **Income/person** \$7,708 (16% of USA).

Politics

French-mandated territory in 1919; independent in 1943 as a republic, with its constitution based on a delicate balance related to the size of the 18 recognized religious communities. Changing Muslim-Christian demographics and the influx of 300,000 Palestinian refugees between 1948 and 1976 upset the status quo, precipitating the 1975-1990 civil war. Israel occupied parts of southern Lebanon 1982-2003. Shi'a, Sunni, Druze and Christian militias fought bitterly with each other. The Syrian army imposed a measure of peace in 1990 and opened the way for the Taif agreement of 1990/91 and a new Lebanese government. Syrian military presence and control ended in 2006 as a result of massive protests after the assassination of Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri. Israel invaded again in 2006 after Hezbollah provocation, wreaking widespread destruction. The country seems in constant political turmoil, with influence and interference by Syria, Iran and Saudi Arabia.

Lebanon

Republic of Lebanon

Asia

Geography

Area 10,230 sq km. A fertile, mountainous state in the East Mediterranean. Rests between Israel and Syria. The site of ancient Phoenicia.

Population	Ann Gr	Density
2010	4,254,583	0.83%
2020	4,586,655	0.72%
2030	4,858,343	0.51%

During the civil war, up to 900,000 emigrated with up to 300,000 more since the war's end. No official census has been taken since the 1930s.

Capital Beirut 1,936,990. **Urbanites** 87.2%. **Pop under 15 yrs** 25%. **Life expectancy** 71.9 yrs.

Peoples

Arabs 93.5%.
Lebanese 66.4%.
Other Arab 27.1%. Palestinian 12.2%; Druze 7.7%; Syrian 1.6%; Egyptian 1.6%.
Other 6.5%. Armenian 4.5%; Kurd 1.7%.

Literacy 86.5%. **Official language** Arabic; French and English are widely used. **All languages** 9. **Indigenous languages** 6. **Languages with Scriptures** 4Bi 1NT 2por.

Economy

Lebanon was the commercial hub of the Middle East until the civil war reduced Beirut to rubble and ruined its profitable trading, banking and tourist industries. Recovery began in 1992 but was reversed by Israel's war in 2006, including the bombing of part of Beirut and widespread infrastructure destruction. Incredible staying power as a commercial centre despite the constant upheaval, but tourism has not boomed as hoped. Many question the long-term economic viability of such a strife-torn and debt-ridden nation.

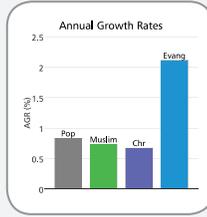
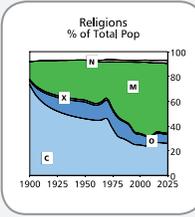
Religion

Freedom of religion; the only Arab state that is not officially Muslim. The Shi'a are about 37% of the population and Sunni 22%. There are 18 recognized religious communities: four Muslim, one Druze, one Jewish and 12 Christian. All figures used here are estimates. The last reliable census including religion was in 1932, when Christians were 53.7% of the population. Deep communal and religious divisions manifest themselves politically. Shi'as are the fastest growing, and only the poorly integrated Palestinians are more under-represented in the political sphere. Lebanon's religious demographics are out of sync with Parliamentary representation, which serves to heighten problems. The Church's greatest challenge is the large-scale emigration of Christians.

Religions	Pop %	Population	Ann Gr
Muslim	58.96	2,508,502	0.7%
Christian	31.97	1,360,190	0.7%
Other	7.00	297,821	1.7%
Non-religious	2.05	87,219	3.5%
Baha'i	0.02	851	0.8%

Christians	Denoms	Pop %	Affiliates	Ann Gr
Protestant	22	0.35	15,000	-0.1%
Independent	8	0.23	10,000	5.2%
Anglican	1	<0.01	<1,000	-1.1%
Catholic	6	23.90	1,017,000	0.9%
Orthodox	7	7.32	312,000	-0.2%
Marginal	5	0.17	7,000	0.2%

Churches	MegaBloc	Congs	Members	Affiliates	TransBloc	Pop %	Population	Ann Gr
Maronite Patriarchate	C	970	457,792	705,000	Evangelicals			
Melchite Cath Patriarchate	C	334	150,270	278,000	Evangelicals	0.5	21,410	2.1%
Greek Orthodox Church	O	273	108,380	194,000	Renewalists			
Armenian Apostolic Ch	O	196	58,659	105,000	Charismatics	0.5	22,932	4.1%
Chaldean Catholic	C	5	5,587	10,000	Pentecostals	<0.1	650	1.4%
Latin-rite Catholic	C	5	5,028	9,000				
Syrian Cath Patriarchate	C	3	4,358	7,800				
Armenian Cath Patriarchate	C	9	3,911	7,000				
Syrian Orthodox Ch	O	4	4,132	6,900				
Jehovah's Witnesses	M	62	3,018	6,700				
Church of the East	O	2	2,371	4,150				
Baptist Convention	P	30	2,100	3,200				
National Evang Union	P	3	1,099	2,000				
Other denominations[36]		176	11,174	21,735				
Total Christians[49]		2,072	817,879	1,360,485				



Answers to Prayer

- 1 Openness to spiritual things** and a growing number of converts from other religious communities continue. Praise God for the grace shown by Christians to those uprooted by the 2006 Israeli invasion. Evangelicals are showing vision and commitment to loving outreach.
- 2 Lebanon remains the only land** in the Middle East where all are legally free to change their religious affiliation. Believers from most other Arab countries can more freely come to Lebanon for Christian training. Pray for this religious freedom to be maintained.

Challenges for Prayer

- 1 Lebanon's tragic history** over the last 70 years, with communal wars, foreign interventions and hostage-taking. With adequate political stability, Lebanon has demonstrated great resilience and potential to rebuild. Pray specifically for:
 - a) The government and its leaders.** There is a lot of disillusionment with the traditional political elite. Pray for a government that rules for the common good, balancing traditional values and demographic realities.
 - b) Full political freedom** to be gained and religious freedom protected. Lebanon, for all its troubles, remains unique in the Middle East for its freedom.
 - c) The healing of deep hurts** in communities, families and individuals. Over 80% of the population were displaced at one time or another during the wars. All have lost loved ones; many lost homes and jobs.
 - d) A spirit of forgiveness.** All have suffered and there are countless opportunities for bitterness and hatred. Pray that the Holy Spirit might do His work of reconciliation.
 - e) The rebuilding of the South** after multiple wars and occupations. Many unexploded munitions from 2006 make rebuilding dangerous.
- 2 The entire nation has been deeply traumatized**, especially Christians. Many despair of any future in Lebanon and have emigrated en masse for economic and security reasons. The Christian percentage has dropped from 62% in 1970 to 32% in 2010. Pray that many may come to personal faith in and deep commitment to the Lord Jesus. Though most Christians would leave if they had the chance, pray for many to choose to stay and remain salt and light in Lebanon.
- 3 The wide variety of Orthodox and Catholic Churches** have a long history of struggling to survive. In the midst of traditionalism, deadness and politicization, there are significant

renewal movements, notably in the Maronite and Eastern Orthodox Churches. Church attendance remains high. The Middle East Council of Churches draws together mainline groups. Pray for new life to infuse these ancient communities and for key religious leaders to personally experience new life.

4 The Protestant Church has struggled to find acceptance, and the many small denominations communicate a message of fragmentation and divisiveness. Conversions have barely replaced losses through emigration. Pray for the ministry of Protestant groups – with a number of new converts from non-Christian backgrounds – that they might grow in number and missions vision. Pray for new growth among mainline Protestants as well. Pray for further fellowship and cooperation to develop among evangelicals. In the 2006 crisis, churches worked together to assist refugees fleeing the war in the South. The Supreme Council represents Protestants in the national framework.

5 Trained leadership in evangelical churches is a precious resource. The decline in foreign missionaries and the emigration of national leaders has left many congregations without effective pastoral care. Despite this, Lebanon has a good number of evangelical Bible schools – the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary, Mediterranean Bible College (Church of God), Christian Alliance Institute of Theology (CMA), and the Near East School of Theology (Presbyterian in origin). These colleges equip many Arab students from outside of Lebanon. Pray for staff members, the supply of needs and for more students. Pray that increasing cooperation among these colleges would result in significant advances for the Kingdom.

6 Lebanon has long been a key centre for Christian ministries to the whole Middle East. So much of this was interrupted, but is regaining momentum once more with stronger indigenous leadership. Pray that Lebanese believers might regain a vision for others and for other lands – the war has caused too many to become insular. Pray specifically for these ministries:

a) **The Bible Society** distributes many Bibles within Lebanon and to surrounding nations. It is growing to meet the increased demand for Bibles and NTs in all communities. The Society has opened some new centres in busy shopping areas. Many in Orthodox and Catholic churches are reading and studying the Scriptures. The Society is one of the few ministries that has good relationships with all confessions.

b) **Christian schools and orphanages.** These are much appreciated, having had a long and fruitful ministry, and have gained in credibility from 1990 onward. Many children from all communities hear the gospel and some come to Christ (LES – Lebanon Evangelical School, Baptists, **MECO**, and others). Many Lebanese political and societal leaders have attended an evangelical school.

c) **Young people and students**, who often struggle with hopelessness as well as frustration with lack of progress and job opportunities. Many feel as if they have been given up on; many are active for real change in Lebanon. Pray for relevant and effective ministry to young people of all faiths – they are the future of Lebanon. Drop-in centres and camps are particularly effective. Most youth are responsive to genuine Christian love, yet more needs to be done (**YFC**, *Grain du Blé*, **YWAM**, Focus on the Family, **IFES**, **CCCI**, local churches).

d) **Christian literature production** is too often disrupted by civil upheavals. Much of this ministry has been transferred to Cyprus, Europe and elsewhere. Pray for Clarion Publishing House (LES), **OM**, Middle East Lutheran Ministry, the Baptist Publishing Center and others who publish and distribute literature for Lebanon and the Arab world.

e) **Radio.** FEBA, IBRA, **TWR** and others broadcast 56 hours/week in Arabic and more in Armenian and English. There are also several local FM stations that broadcast Christian programmes, and Arabic Christian radio is widely available through the Internet.

f) **Christian TV.** Television is the primary source of information and entertainment. There are a number of local Christian TV stations. Satellite television channels, including but not limited to **SAT-7**, have had a deep impact. Programmes are also re-broadcast by the Catholic TV station *Télélumière*. **SAT-7**'s main studios for the Middle East are now in Beirut.

7 Expatriate Christian workers still have a role to play in Lebanon. Pray for more to be called and enabled to identify with and serve the Church and all Lebanese. There are many areas where the love of Christ may be demonstrated – reconstruction, work with young people, drug rehabilitation as well as discipleship and church development ministries (**CMA**, **MECO**, **AoG**, **BMS**, **IMB**, **WV1**, **WEC**, **YWAM**, **OM** and others).

8 The unreached. Conversion to Christ, although legal, is nonetheless very costly to those from other backgrounds. Despite this, the number of those coming to Jesus is significantly increasing. So pray for:

- a) **The Shi'a Muslims** are the fastest growing population and increasingly influential. They live mainly in the south, in the Bekaa Valley and in southern Beirut. The Hezbollah party is supported by Iran. Pray that more might discover the emptiness of a religion without Christ, as ever-growing numbers have done!
- b) **The Sunni** are mainly in the northeast, and in the cities of Beirut, Tripoli and Sidon.
- c) **The Druze** and their well-organized, close-knit community. Their heartland is the mountain area east of Beirut. They have a secretive religion that came out of Islam; only 20% are fully initiated into it. A multi-agency partnership is seeing several hundred come to Christ. Most Druze believers remain incognito, but others form a growing church or take their new faith back to Syria with them.
- d) **The Palestinians.** Their story is full of tragedy, poverty and disenfranchisement. No full peace or harmony is possible without a lasting solution to their situation, especially for those in refugee camps. There are Christians among them, some evangelical, but the majority are Muslim and unreached. Differences among radical Islamist minority groups have brought suffering onto the majority, such as the conflict in the Nahr al-Bared refugee camp.
- e) **The poor and disadvantaged.** The majority of the very poor are Muslim. The blind, deaf and disabled are often neglected by society in general, but doors are open for Christians to minister to them. Pray for more Christians and agencies to demonstrate care and love to these needy people.