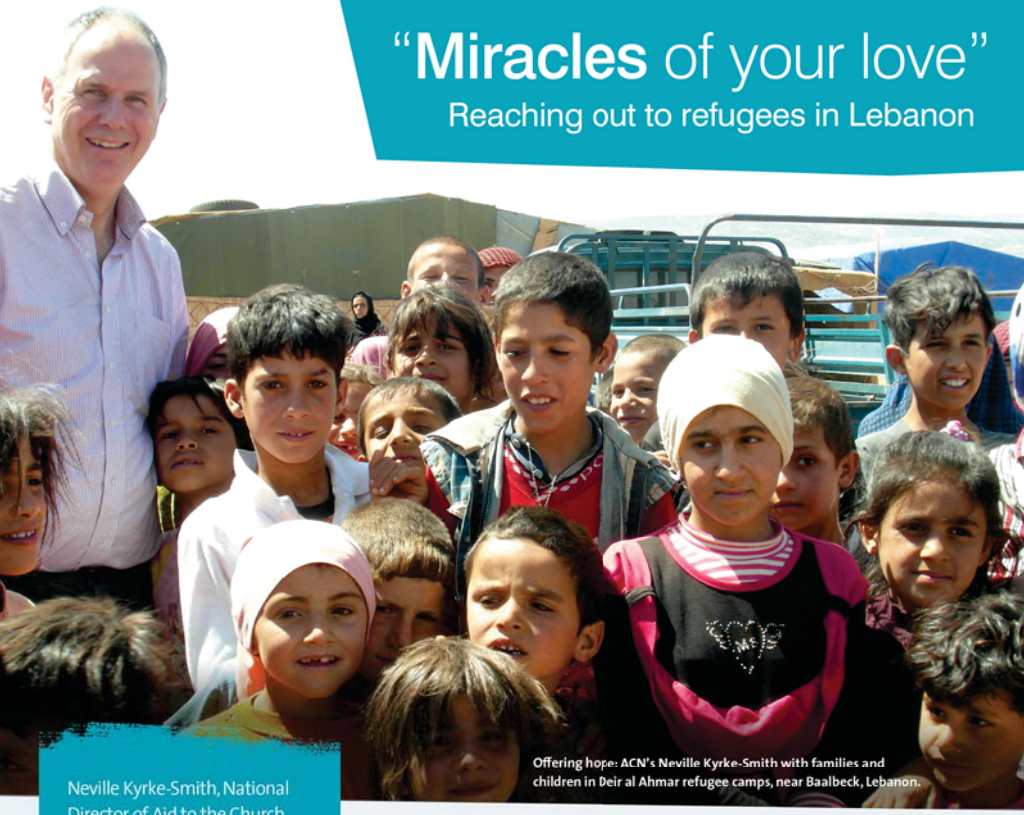
"Miracles of your love"

Reaching out to refugees in Lebanon



Offering hope: ACN's Neville Kyrke-Smith with families and children in Deir al Ahmar refugee camps, near Baalbeck, Lebanon.

Neville Kyrke-Smith, National Director of Aid to the Church in Need (UK) recently returned from Lebanon, where he witnessed the love of the Good Shepherd Sisters caring for thousands of refugees from Iraq and Syria thanks to your compassion.



Seeking refuge: Sahba, a Chaldean Christian fled from Nineveh, Iraq. Pictured alongside her daughter Darine, aged one.

Dispensing the love of God

I'm standing in the crowded corridor of St Antony's Dispensary, on the outskirts of Beirut. Small children are cuddled up on their mothers' knees, waiting for vital inoculations.

Making my way along the narrow, crowded corridors of this dispensary, I meet young families who have fled from Syria and Iraq. I speak to Sahba, a young Iraqi mother, with her three children, who have arrived from near Mosul.

Christians in Mosul were told to convert, leave or die by extremists. Sahba tells me: **"We had to go. We are here and I am very worried for my parents who are still there in the Nineveh plains. It is a very bad situation with ISIS and many people are not able to leave or get into the north."**

Sr Hanan, the Good Shepherd Sister who runs the dispensary, tells me more Iraqis have arrived in the last few weeks – after the frightening outbreak of conflict.

As I leave the dispensary, a terrified teenage girl from Aleppo in Syria is sobbing uncontrollably, shaking and muttering to herself. Her mother tries to comfort and console her as she leads her in to see the psychiatrist.

Sr Hanan explains that there are so many cases – children, teenagers and adults – who need counselling after what they have seen, lived through and suffered. In one case, after a woman had been attacked and violated, it took her seven months to begin to speak again.

[Continues overleaf...]



Abed Rabbo and his family are among those being helped by the Good Shepherd Sisters in Deir al Ahmar refugee camps.

Being with **the people**

In Deir al Ahmar in the Bekaa Valley, which borders Syria, the refugees outnumber the 5,000 inhabitants. Deir al Ahmar means "red abbey" which could refer to the early martyrs of this third-century Christian village.

I sit on a cushion on the floor in a refugee tent talking to Abed Rabbo's family. The flaps blow in the hot, dusty conditions as I hear about the family of ten – six girls and four boys – aged four to 18. His wife Adla tells me: **"It is not a life here. My husband is deaf and cannot work. The state helped us in Syria, but now we have nothing here. We want to go back. We need help."**

Sr Micheline, the Good Shepherd Sister who oversees work in the camps, tells me that there are 1,500 families with an average of six children in each family – but some families have 12 or even 25. As well as helping Christian refugee families sheltering in Deir al Ahmar, they are reaching out to the Muslim refugees in the camps, providing education for children from both groups. Sr Micheline said: "We have also helped develop classes for the children on the culture of peace, with 200 children involved. About 400 children will also be on our summer camps.

"Children are changed by this involvement and these courses – it is the first time ever that the Muslims have been in touch with Christians."

Sr Micheline continues: **"Please continue to pray for us, to help us with the mission to help people who have suffered so much. The needs continue – especially now for food and water."**

Archbishop Elias Nassar, Maronite Archbishop of Saida (Sidon) who will be coming to the UK in October 2014 to speak at ACN events in Westminster and Motherwell told us: *"We are called to evangelise. We have to build faith – to keep Christians here, but every time a bomb goes off more people want to leave. It is very hard. We were here before the Muslims – and we have to present Christ to the people, teaching and deepening the faith."*





Ministering to the needy: Good Shepherd Sisters, Sr Micheline and Sr Hanan with refugee children in Deir al Ahmar refugee camps, near Baalbeck, Lebanon

Thank you for sustaining faith and hope through your charity. As well as the invaluable help you are giving to the Good Shepherd Sisters' vital work, Aid to the Church in Need is supporting numerous projects: including food, shelter and medicine for Syrian families sheltering in the Valley of the Christians and emergency assistance for Iraqis driven out of Mosul by extremists in June and July.

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