

MISSIONARY ATLAS PROJECT
Africa
Lebanon

Snapshot

Name: Lebanese Republic or Lebanon; formerly Greater Lebanon

Local long form *Al Jumhuriyah al Lubnaniyah*; local short form Lubnan; Arabic: لبنان (Arabic: الجمهورية اللبنانية)

Population: 3,874,050

Flag: The flag of Lebanon features the Lebanon Cedar in green against a white backdrop, with two horizontal red stripes on the top and bottom.



Geography: Middle East, bordering Mediterranean Sea, between Israel and Syria



Capital: Beirut

Independence: 22 November 1943 (from League of Nations mandate under French administration)

Languages: Arabic (official), French, English, Armenian

Literacy: Total population 87.4%; males 93.1%, females 82.2%

Religions:

Islam 59.7% (if Druze are counted as Muslim, the figure would change to 65.7%.
1,961,200 Muslims, 229,800 Druze

Christian 31.9% (this figure, however, includes all Catholic and Orthodox Churches).
When Catholic, Orthodox, and Marginal Christian groups are subtracted from the total Christian figure, one gets the following:

Catholic/Orthodox/Marginal 618,697 members 1,047,000 adherents

Non Catholic/Orthodox/Marginal 14,500 members, 25,000 adherents or about 0.0034%

Government:

Lebanon is a Republic with three branches, the Executive, the Legislative, and the Judicial. Law is a mixture of Ottoman Law, Canon Law, Napoleonic Code, and civil law.

Economy:

Lebanon's economy has been seriously damaged by wars and civil unrest. The latest invasion by Israel in 2006 further damaged a fragile economic situation.

Number of people groups:

22 (Joshua Project), 11 (peoplegroups.org)

Arab- 95%

Armenian- 4%

Other (Turk, Alawite, etc.)- 1%

Many religious groups (Druzes, Alawite, etc., are basically people groups as well.
(CIA world fact book)

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lebanon>

County Profile

Demographics

Lebanon has not taken a census since 1932. The 1997 estimated population was 3,111,828, but this figure, provided by the Lebanese government, does not include Palestinian refugees and foreign workers, mainly Syrian. The *CIA World Factbook* estimates the population at 3,874,050 in July 2006..

Densities are highest along the coast and on the lower western slopes of the Lebanon Mountains. Some 88 percent of the population is urban. Emigration from Lebanon to other countries, especially among Christians, has been steady since the mid-19th century, and it increased sharply during the civil war. Within the country, thousands of Shiite Muslim refugees fled fighting in southern Lebanon in the 1990s and moved into shantytowns in Beirut's southern suburbs.

Population

3,874,050 (July 2006 est.)

Age structure

0-14 years: 26.5%

15-64 years: 66.5%

65 years and over: 7%

Population growth rate

1.23% (2006 est.)

Birth rate

18.52 births/1,000 population (2006 est.)

Death rate

6.21 deaths/1,000 population (2006 est.)

Life expectancy at birth

total population: 72.88 years

male: 70.41 years

female: 75.48 years (2006 est.)

Source- CIA World Factbook homepage,

[http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761564963_2/Lebanon_\(country\).html#p52](http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761564963_2/Lebanon_(country).html#p52)

CIA Factbook

Language

The major language that is spoken today in Lebanon is Arabic, recognized as the official language. However, many people speak French since it is taught in the school from kindergarten

up and the French dominated Lebanon for so many years. English is another language that is spoken and learned in schools and universities by the Lebanese people.

Society/Culture

As in other Arab countries the traditional lifestyle of the Lebanese revolves strongly around the family, socializing and hospitality. Western influences, mainly French and American, have given the country a cosmopolitan facade, mostly in the main cities. Outside the cities, especially in the mountains, the people retain the old customs and traditions. The Lebanese people, despite being ethnically and religiously diverse because of the country's long history of conquest and assimilation, are friendly and hospitable. They are familiar with foreigners' ways and dress and although sleeveless tops, miniskirts and shorts are acceptable in Beirut, the rest of the country is more traditional and modest dress is recommended. This is particularly necessary when visiting mosques and other religious places.

Holidays:

Ramadan- ninth month of the Muslim year

Eid Al-Fitr, the end of Ramadan, a three day festival

Eid Al-Adha, a feast at the end of the Hadj (the pilgrimage month to Mecca)

The First of Muharram, the Muslim New Year

Ashura- a Shi'ite commemoration and day of mourning

The prophet Muhammad's birthday

Easter- celebrated on two dates for the Greek Orthodox and for the Protestants and Catholics

New Year's Day- Jan. 1

St. Maroun's Day- the patron saint of Maronite Christians, Feb. 9

The Day of the Ascension- May 15

The Feast of the Assumption- August 15

Christmas- Dec. 25

Boxing Day- Dec. 26

Labor Day- May 1

Martyr's Day- honors patriots killed by the Turks during World War I on May 6

Independence Day- Nov. 22

They can also be very superstitious. Within Muslim societies, they believe in good luck and evil spirits. One can find charms around peoples' necks, in their cars, homes, and even grocery stores. The evil eye is a good example of a charm. It is an oval eye with a blue dot in the middle. It keeps away evil spirits and bad luck. Also one can find the hand of Fatimah which is a hand with four fingers. Sometimes they will even use verse from the Quran to keep away evil spirits.

The idea of family is so important within Lebanese culture. Children tend to live with their parents until they get married. Most businesses are family owned and run, and the revenue sent back by family members working abroad has kept the Lebanese economy afloat during the difficult war years. People who live in the cities have a fairly Western style of living and most have small families, averaging about two children each. Rural families, on the other hand, live on family owned farms and have bigger families, sometimes ten to fifteen children.

Source: http://www.arab.net/lebanon/ln_people.htm, WORLDMARK: Encyclopedia of Cultures and Daily Life

Government

As defined by the constitution of 1926 and subsequent amendments, Lebanon is an independent republic. Executive power is vested in a president (elected by the legislature for six years) and a prime minister and cabinet, chosen by the president but responsible to the legislature. Under an agreement dating back to the French mandate, the president must be a Maronite Christian, the prime minister a Sunni Muslim, and the president of the National Assembly a Shi'i Muslim. The Taif Accord of 1989 set the Christian-Muslim balance in parliament at fifty-fifty, but the failure of Christians to participate in the elections of 1992 and 1996 gave Muslim groups the largest number of seats in the Chamber. There has been no official census in the country since 1932, but most observers believe Muslims now form the majority with the Shiites as the largest single group.

On the local government level, Lebanon is divided into five provinces (muhafazat) of Beirut, North Lebanon, South Lebanon, Bekaa, and Mount Lebanon, each with its district administration.

There are such things as religious courts found in Lebanon. There are separate religious courts for the Islamic, Christian, and Jewish faiths. They deal with marriages, deaths, inheritances, and other matters of personal status in their respective faiths. There is also a separate military court system dealing with cases involving military personnel and military related issues.

The law provides for the right to a fair public trial and an independent and impartial judiciary. In practice, politically influential elements succeed in intervening to obtain desired results.

Matters of state security are dealt with by a five-member Judicial Council. The Judicial Council is a permanent tribunal, and the cabinet, on the recommendation of the Ministry of Justice, decides whether to bring a case before Judicial Council.

In the refugee camps, the Palestinian elements implement an autonomous system of justice in which rival factions try opponents without any semblance of due process. Hezbollah applies Islamic law in the area under its control.

Source: CIA World Fact Book; WORLDMARK: Encyclopedia of the Nations, Asia and Oceania, Tenth Edition

Economy

Lebanon relies heavily on its trade with different countries, agriculture, and tourism. The 1975-76 war wreaked havoc on the Lebanese economy causing an estimated \$5 billion in property damage and reduced economic activities to about 50% of the prewar level. The cost of reconstruction after the Israeli-Palestinian-Syrian war of 1982 was estimated at \$12-15 billion. Lebanon was able to withstand economic devastation because of help from abroad from such countries as the US, France, Germany, and Arab countries, and foreign subsidies to various

political groups. The economy hit another low because of the 1982 war and affected it for many more years. In 1987, inflation had risen to 487%. After the 1989 Taif Accord for National Reconciliation ended hostilities, the economy began to recover. Economic activity surged in 1991, and in 1993 the Hariri Government was able to stabilize the economy, and launch a program to reconstruct the economy's infrastructure. In 1997, unemployment remained high at about 18% although inflation had been reduced to around 5% by 1998. Gross domestic product (GDP) totaled \$21.8 billion in 2004, with the GDP expanding by an average of 4.4 percent annually in the period 2000–2004.

Source: WORLDMARK Encyclopedia of the Nations, Asia & Oceania, p.342
[http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761564963_5_20/Lebanon_\(country\).html#s20](http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761564963_5_20/Lebanon_(country).html#s20)

Literacy

Literacy

definition: age 15 and over can read and write

total population: 87.4%

male: 93.1%

female: 82.2% (2003 est.)

Elementary school education is made free by the government and is required for all for five years. Lebanon considers education to be so important for the future of their country. Beirut is home to six major universities: The American University of Beirut, The Jesuit-sponsored Saint Joseph University, The government-supported Lebanese University, The Beirut Arab University, The Lebanese American University, and The Armenian Haigazian College. Lebanon also has more than 100 technical, vocational, and other specialized schools and colleges.

Source: CIA World Factbook homepage, http://www.arab.net/lebanon/ln_education.htm

Land/Geography

Lebanon is a tiny county, with an area of only a little more than 10,400 sq km (4,000 sq mi)-about the size of the state of Connecticut. It lies on the east coast of the Mediterranean Sea, north of Israel, south of Turkey, south and west of Syria, and northeast of Cyprus. It has two mountain ranges, a coastal strip, an inland plain, dozens of rivers, and four lakes. Lebanon has been famous for its cedars, but due to centuries of cutting and herds of goats eating the seedlings, very few cedars are left. Those that remain are now protected. The rainy season lasts from mid-November through March, with very heavy rains at times causing flooding due to poor drainage. Summers on the coast are hot and humid; the mountains are somewhat cooler and breezier. Lebanon has a lush and rich soil and can grow so many different types of plant life such as olives, citrus fruits, apples and grapes.

Source: WORLDMARK Encyclopedia of Cultures and Daily Life Volume 3: Asia & Oceania

History

Early Times

Lebanon's long and often turbulent history reaches back to the dawn of civilization peoples have occupied the coastal plain and the Bekáa Valley since the Old Stone Age, or Paleolithic, roughly 7,000 to 9,000 years ago. Several waves of people, mostly Semites, entered the region from the Arabian Peninsula. By 2800 BC, cedar timber from Byblos was being traded for metals and ivory from Egypt. They established cities at *Beirut, Byblos, Tyre, Sidon, and Baalbek*.

About 2200 BC, Semitic Amorites arrived from Arabia and Syria. From the western Amorites, the Canaanites evolved along the full length of the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea. During succeeding centuries the Canaanites developed the most favored coastal villages into celebrated city-states: Tripoli, Byblos, Beirut, Sidon, and Tyre.

By about 1100 BC the northern Canaanites became known as Phoenicians. The name came from the Greek word *phoinos*, meaning "red," a reference to the unique purple dye the Phoenicians produced from *murex* seashells. The Phoenicians developed 22-letter Phoenician alphabet that they spread throughout the region. This alphabet was one of the earliest.

The Phoenicians mastered the art of navigation and they dominated the Mediterranean Sea trade for 400 to 450 years. They established cities at *Beirut, Byblos, Tyre, Sidon, and Baalbek* and influenced surrounding peoples for centuries. Phoenicians surrendered to and adjusted to successive conquerors: Assyrians in 867 BC; Babylonians in the 590s BC; Persians in 538 BC; and Greeks under Alexander the Great in 333 BC. Phoenician trade declined with Greek competition after the 5th century BC.

After this succession of different rulers, Lebanon became part of the Roman Empire in 64 BC. The Romans began an imperial rule over the area that continued under the Byzantine Empire (Eastern Roman Empire) for 573 years. Under Rome, Phoenicians prospered again as they rebuilt fleets and made great cultural progress.

Aramaic replaced Phoenician as the main language and by the 4th century Christianity was firmly established. During the early years of the Christian era, when theological differences bred numerous break-away sects, Lebanon became a refuge for religious minorities fleeing persecution.

In the 7th century, the Christian sect that was later to become the Maronite church settled in the northern districts of the Lebanese Mountains to avoid conversion to Islam. The Arabs, inspired by the teachings of the Prophet Mohammed, had converted most of the region to Islam. The geographical inaccessibility that made Lebanon attractive as a religious refuge also appealed to Muslims. Shiites found a haven in Lebanon during the 9th century and the Druzes in the 11th century. The country allowed the different religious groups to exist, but this openness hampered unity of the country as a whole.

The Sidonians grew wealthy with their invention of blown glass. The Roman influence on the regional culture can be clearly seen in the majestic ruins of Roman temples in Lebanon, particularly in Baalbek. Beirut's School of law became famous while the region was under

Roman rule. The Semitic Phoenician language yielded to the regionally spoken Semitic Aramaic, introducing new elements to Phoenician culture.

Under the Orthodox Byzantines, Christianity became deeply rooted. In the 6th century AD monks introduced silkworms from China, and a silk industry developed that brought wealth for centuries. Around the same time, earthquakes destroyed Beirut and its law school and badly damaged the great temples in Baalbek.

Arab conquests in the 7th century brought political and cultural upheavals to the entire Middle East including Lebanon. In the late 7th century, Maronite Christians, seeking refuge from Byzantine oppression, migrated from the interior of Syria into the northern Lebanon Mountains. Gradually, the area named Phoenicia became Mount Lebanon or simply Lebanon.

In 661 a Muslim empire under the Umayyad caliphate arose and placed its capital in Damascus (present-day Syria). The Umayyads incorporated the Fertile Crescent, including Lebanon, into their empire. In 750 the Umayyads were overthrown by the Abbasid Caliphate, which ruled from Baghdad.

Early in the 11th century a heretical group, the Druze, emerged from the Ismailite Shias. Named Druze after one of their leaders, they evolved in the Mount Hermon area in the southeast of present-day Lebanon. Later, some Druze filtered north into the southern Lebanon Mountains. The decline of the Abbasids after the 11th century opened the Levant to several contending powers, among them the Seljuks. Their territorial advances, especially into Palestine, aroused Christian fears in Western Europe and provoked the invasion of the Crusaders between 1095 and 1291.

Crusader influence was strong in Lebanon, which was divided between the kingdoms of Tripoli and Jerusalem. During Crusader occupation, Maronites cooperated with their fellow Christians and enjoyed expanded group identity. This collaboration increased the suspicions of Muslims. Between the 11th and 13th centuries, Shia Muslim groups from several areas peacefully migrated into Lebanon's northern Bekáa and also later to the south.

Lebanon then became a shared region by Maronites, Druze, Sunnis, and Shias. These same groups would clash in the civil war of 1975 to 1991. As the 13th century closed, Egyptian Mamluks led to the expulsion of the Crusaders and occupied the Lebanon area. For more than 200 years under the Mamluks, Lebanon's coastal cities prospered from revived trade.

Under Ottoman Rule

In 1516 the Ottoman Turks conquered the entire eastern Mediterranean coast. Lebanon became part of the Ottoman Empire. For three centuries the Ottomans granted local leaders relative autonomy. Under the Ottoman overlords, amirs (princes) of two local dynasties ruled successively: the Maans (1516-1697) and the Shihabs (1697-1842), both Druze families. Maan amir Fakhr al-Din II (1586-1635), a tolerant Europeanized Druze, introduced Western-style development. The later amirs of the Shihabs became Maronites and, under Bashir II (1788-1840), turned against their Druze neighbors.

Under Ottoman rule, Lebanon developed economic and religious ties with Europe. Its openness to the West resulted in its becoming a hot bed of political strife between various foreign nations including France, Russia and Britain. These powerful countries assumed the protection of certain ethnic- religious groups. France supported the Christian Maronites.

In 1860, a bloody civil war culminated in a massacre of the Maronites by the Druze. The Druze massacred more than 10,000 Christians, mostly Maronites. European powers landed forces to stop the fighting and encourage better and more open administration. Britain and France intervened and pressured the Turks into establishing a new Christian-dominated administration for Lebanon which lasted until World War I. A relative freedom emerged as a result, attracting Arab intellectuals and foreign missionaries.

After World War I, the League of Nations awarded Lebanon to France as a mandate. During the 1920s the French redefined Lebanon's borders, combining the largely Muslim-inhabited coastal plain with the Christian-dominated mountains to create the Republic of Lebanon. The mandate combined the mainly Christian Lebanon Mountains with the mainly Muslim coastal plain (formerly Phoenicia) and the Muslim Bekáa (including some of the Anti-Lebanon mountain ridges) to form "Greater Lebanon," marking the creation of Lebanon as it is known today.

The combination made the new country far more viable. From 1926 when France forged a dependent Republic of Lebanon the modern nation emerged as an independent state in 1943. Conflict between the ethnic and religious groups, however, developed. Lebanon remained under French mandate until 1943, when Lebanon became fully independent.

Modern Times

For a while after the independence of 1943, independent Lebanon was a model ecumenical society. Its strategic Middle Eastern location and relatively stable government made it a major trade and financial center. Lebanese political leaders forged an unwritten National Pact designed to promote cooperation and conciliation among the rival religious groups.

The concept of a confessional democracy was unique. The National Pact was partly based on the 1932 census, which ranked the major sects in order of population as Maronites, Sunni Muslims, Shia Muslims, Greek Orthodox, Druze, and Greek Catholics. Among the pact's provisions, Maronites and Sunni Muslims were assured dominant political roles in proportion to their 1932 populations. Peace did not, however, last because the Christians had more control within the government and the Muslims felt excluded from the political realm.

A second problem arose. Lebanon was gradually drawn in to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Although the country did not actively participate militarily, displaced Palestinian Muslim refugees flooded into the country and continued their attacks on Israel from Lebanese bases. In 1958 a Muslim rebellion ended when American marines landed in Beirut.

In the summer of 1975 all-out civil war broke out between the Muslim coalition allied with Palestinian groups and the Christian-dominated militias. This tension arose partially from actions of President Camille Chamoun who provoked political foes, especially Druze and Sunni Muslims, by challenging the constitution in an attempt to gain a second term. The United States, fearing the war's effect on the wider region, intervened on July 15. The Marines' presence helped stabilize the country, and by early August the fighting was finished. In three months of warfare, an estimated 2,000 to 4,000 people were killed.

In April 1976, an uneasy cease-fire was forced upon the two sides when Syrian military forces intervened at the request of the Lebanese president, *Suleiman Franjeh* and with the approval of the Arab League of States. Nevertheless sporadic violence continued. In 1978 Israel invaded southern Lebanon in an attempt to eliminate Palestinian bases.

Withdrawing three months later after a United Nations peacekeeping force was sent to the area, they reinvaded in 1982, occupying Beirut and forcing the PLO to evacuate its head quarters. For seven weeks the Israelis relentlessly bombed the Muslim half of Beirut by air, sea and land. The USA arranged for the evacuation of PLO fighters to other Arab Countries, and a multinational Force of US and West European troops was deployed to Beirut to protect Palestinian and Muslim civilians.

After the assassination of president-elect *Bashir Gemayel*, Israeli-backed Christian militias massacred Palestinian civilians in the *Sabra* and *Chatila* camps in West Beirut. A year later Israeli troops withdrew to southern Lebanon. No sooner had they left when fighting broke out between Lebanon's Christian and *Druze* militias, and terrorist attacks on the multinational force including the US marine headquarters at Beirut airport resulted in hundreds of casualties. After 300 US and French troops were killed on October 23, 1983, the Western forces pulled out. Factional fighting continued and Westerners in Beirut became the targets of radical Shiite Muslims with an allegiance to Iran.

In 1988 a parliamentary power struggle led to the formation of rival Christian and Muslim governments. In 1989 the Lebanese parliament accepted an Arab-brokered peace accord for national reconciliation. MPs elected Maronite *Rene Mooed* as president who was assassinated 17 days later. With the help of the Syrians, the Lebanese army took control of Beirut and by 1992 under pressure from Iran and the US, all the foreign hostages captured several years earlier were released.

Until the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990), the country enjoyed relative calm and prosperity, driven by the tourism, agriculture, and banking sectors of the economy. Lebanon was considered the banking capital of the Arab world and was known as the "Switzerland of the Middle East" due to its financial power but also because of its beauty. Lebanon was chosen over Switzerland for skiing competition for Europe at one time. Lebanon also attracted large numbers of tourists. Beirut became widely referred to as the "Paris of the Middle East."

In 1992 Mr. *Rafik Al Hariri* was appointed Prime Minister of Lebanon. Mr. *Hariri* initiated many projects to redevelop war torn Lebanon, especially the capital Beirut, and bring it back to its former glory. Mr. *Hariri* and Lebanese President *Elias Hrawi* strove to develop the

Lebanese economy and moral by rebuilding war-torn areas and trying to move on despite so many lost lives throughout the years.

The extensive efforts to revive the economy and rebuild national infrastructure resulted in a considerable degree of stability throughout much of the country. Beirut's reconstruction was almost complete. An increasing number of foreign tourists were pouring into Lebanon's resorts. However, the 2006 Israel-Lebanon conflict brought mounting casualties, extensive damage to the infrastructure, and massive population displacement.

This 2006 Israel-Lebanon conflict, known in Lebanon as the July War and in Israel as the Second Lebanon War, involved conflict in Lebanon and northern Israel. The fighting was primarily between Hezbollah paramilitary forces and the Israeli military. The conflict began on July 12, 2006, and continued until a ceasefire arranged by the United Nations took effect on August 14. The war formally ended on September 8 when Israel ceased their naval blockade of Lebanon.

The war actually began when Hezbollah fired Katyusha rockets and mortars at Israeli military positions. These attacks diverted attention from another Hezbollah unit that crossed the border, and kidnapped two Israeli soldiers, and killed three others. Israeli troops lost five more men attempting without success to rescue the abducted soldiers. Israel responded with air and artillery strikes on Lebanese targets, including Rafik Hariri International Airport. Israel charged that Hezbollah used this airport to import weapons. The Israeli armed forces instituted an air and naval blockade and a ground invasion of southern Lebanon. Hezbollah retaliated with rockets into northern Israel and faced the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) from prepared defensive positions.

The conflict killed over 1,400 people, most of whom were Lebanese civilians, severely damaged Lebanese territory, displaced about 900,000 Lebanese and 300,000 Israelis, and disrupted normal life across Lebanon and northern Israel. Even after the ceasefire, 256,000 Lebanese remained displaced, and much of Southern Lebanon remained uninhabitable due to unexploded bombs.

On August 11, 2006, the United Nations Security Council unanimously approved Resolution 1701 in a peace effort. The resolution, approved by both Lebanese and Israeli governments, called for the disarming of Hezbollah, the withdrawal of Israel, the deployment of Lebanese military, and an enlarged United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) in southern Lebanon.

The Lebanese army began deploying in southern Lebanon on August 17. The blockade was lifted on September 8. By October 1, 2006, most Israeli troops withdrew from Lebanon, though the last of the troops continued to occupy the border-straddling village of Ghajar until December 3, 2006. The effects of this war will continue for years. The internal situation in Lebanon cries out for extensive help.

Source: <http://www.arab.net/lebanon/>,
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lebanon>; [http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761564963_8/Lebanon_\(country\).html#p93](http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761564963_8/Lebanon_(country).html#p93)

Christian History

Christianity arrived during the Byzantine Roman era (AD 4-636) and its followers in Lebanon have since become divided into a variety of sects including Maronite, Roman Catholic, Greek Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Armenian Catholic, Armenian Orthodox, and Protestant. During the early years of the Church, Lebanon had become an area where many Christian heretical groups fled and spread their wrong teachings.

Religions

Non-Christian:

Islam

Islam claims up to 59.76 % of the people of Lebanon or some 1,961, 196. Islam is said to be gaining at a rate of + 3.5 % annually. Islam in Lebanon is, however, divided into a number of distinct groups. The total percentage of Islamic people would rise by 7 % if one considers the Druze as Islamic as this profile does. With the Druze, Islam can claim 66.97% of the people.

Sunni

Sunni Muslims are those that follow only the teachings of the prophet Mohammad and the *Quran*. They do not recognize the need for a priesthood to mediate the faith to the community of believers. The Sunnis, especially the Wahhabis of Saudi Arabia, stand for the original simplicity of Islam.

Religious leadership of the Sunni community in Lebanon is based on principles and institutions deriving partly from traditional Islam and partly from French influence. Under the Mandate, the French established a Supreme Islamic Council at the national level, headed by a Grand Mufti and a national Directorate of Waqfs; these institutions continued to exist in the mid-1980s. The French also established local departments of waqfs, which staffed and maintained hospitals, schools, cemeteries, and mosques. In addition, the waqfs managed the funds that supported these operations.

Shaykh is an honorary title given to any Muslim religious man in Lebanon. As a result of the 1975 Civil War and the intensification in sectarian mobilization and identification, the religious leaders of the Sunni community assumed a more political role, especially with the advent of Islamic fundamentalism in Lebanon. As of 1987, the Sunni mufti, Shaykh Hasan Khalid, was the most powerful Sunni leader; he headed what was called the Islamic Grouping, which was composed of all Sunni traditional leaders. The Sunni Ulama (learned religious men) of Lebanon emulated the Shia practice of combining temporal and religious power in the person of the imam.

In 1987 the majority of Lebanese Sunnis resided in urban centers. It is estimated that more than two-thirds of them lived in Beirut, Sidon, and Baalbek. The few rural Sunnis lived in the Akkar region, the western Biqa Valley, around Baalbek, and in the Shuf

Mountains. Their typical occupations were in the realms of trade, industry, and real estate. Large Sunni families enjoyed political and social significance.

The Kurds are non-Arab Sunnis of whom there are only a few in Lebanon, concentrated mainly in Beirut. They originated in the Taurus and Zagros Mountains of Iraq, Iran, Turkey, and Syria. The Kurds of Lebanon tended to settle there permanently because of Lebanon's pluralistic society. Although they are Sunni Muslims, Kurds speak their own language.

Twelver or Imami Shias

Leadership of the Shia community is held by the Imam, which they believe is descended from Ali. A son usually inherited the office from his father. In the eighth century, however, succession became confused when the Imam, Ja'far al Sadiq, first named his eldest son, Ismail, his successor, then changed his mind and named a younger son, Musa al Kazim. Ismail died before his father and thus never had an opportunity to assert his claim. When Jafar died in 765, the imamate entrusted on to Musa.

Those Shia who followed Musa are known to Western scholars as the Imami or Twelver Shias. The part of the community that refused to acknowledge Musa's legitimacy and insisted on Ismail's son's right to rule as imam became known as Ismailis.

The name "Twelver" relates to the disappearance of the twelfth imam, Muhammad al Muntazar, in about 874. He was a child, and after his disappearance he became known as a messianic figure, *Ali Mahdi*, who never died but remains to this day hidden from view. The Twelver Shias believe his return will usher in a golden era.

In the mid-1980s the Shias generally occupied the lowest stratum of Lebanese society; they were peasants or workers except for a small Shia bourgeoisie. The Shias were concentrated chiefly in the poor districts of southern Lebanon and the Biqa. From these rural areas, stricken by poverty and neglected by the central government, many Shias migrated to the suburbs of Beirut.

Ismailis

The Ismailis are Shias known as Seveners because they believe Ismail was the seventh Imam. The Ismaili sect is divided into two branches: the Mustalian branch is found primarily in North Yemen, and the Nizari branch is found in the Iranian district of Salamiya, Afghanistan, Soviet Central Asia, India, the hitral and Gilgit areas of Pakistan, and East Africa. Ismaili beliefs are complex and syncretic, combining elements from the philosophies of Plotinus, Pythagoras, Aristotle, gnosticism, and the Manichaeans, as well as components of Judaism, Christianity, and Eastern religions. Ismaili tenets are unique among Muslims. Ismailis place particular emphasis on *taqiyya*, the practice of dissimulation about one's beliefs to protect oneself from harassment or persecution. Ismaili beliefs are kept in secret and are therefore very hard to understand what they actually believe in.

Alawis

The Alawis are also known as "Nusayris" because of their concentration in the Nusayriyah Mountains in western Syria. They appear to be descendants of people who lived in this region at the time of Alexander the Great. When Christianity flourished in the Fertile Crescent, the Alawis, isolated in their little communities, clung to their own pre-Islamic religion. After hundreds of years of Ismaili influence, however, the Alawis moved closer to Islam. Furthermore, contacts with the Byzantines and the Crusaders added Christian elements to the Alawis' new creeds and practices. For example, Alawis celebrate Christmas, Easter, and the Epiphany, and use sacramental wine in some ceremonies. They enjoyed some freedom under Ottoman rule, but then that all changed and the Ottomans started to repress them. They were seen as infidels.

Alawis are not considered to be Muslims by the Sunni Muslims. However, the Alawis see themselves as genuine Muslims. In the early 1970s, Imam Musa as Sadr declared the Alawi sect a branch of Shia Islam. Like Ismaili Shias, Alawis believe in a system of divine incarnation. Unlike Ismailis, Alawis regard Ali as the incarnation of God. Because many of the tenets of the faith are secret, Alawis have refused to discuss their faith with outsiders. Only an elect few learn the religion after a lengthy initiation process. Alawis study the Quran and recognize the five pillars of Islam.. Alawis do not set aside a particular building for worship. In the past, Sunni government officials forced them to build mosques, but these were invariably abandoned. Only the men take part in worship.

Druzes

The religion of the Druzes may be regarded as an offshoot of Ismaili Islam. Historically it springs from the Fatimid Caliph of Egypt, Hakim (996-1021 A.D.), who considered himself the final incarnation of God. His close associates and followers Hamza and Darazi (hence the name Druze) spread the new doctrine among the inhabitants of southern Lebanon. The Druzes believe that Hakim is not dead but absent and will return to his people. Like the Ismailis, they also believe in emanations of the deity, in supernatural hierarchies, and in the reincarnation of souls.

The Druzes are religiously divided into two groups. Those who master the secrets and teaching of the sect and who respect its dictates in their daily life, are referred to as *uqqal* (the mature) and are regarded as the religious elite. Believers who are not entitled to know the inner secrets of the religion and who do not practice their religion are called *juhhal* (the ignorant).

Source: <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/lbtoc.html>

Catholics/Orthodox Churches

In many circles, Catholic and Orthodox groups are considered under the overall category of "Christian." Christians under these rankings comprise 31.93 % of the people in Lebanon or

some 1,047,875. If the Catholic and Orthodox statistics are taken out of the “Christian” categories, the percentage of Christians in Lebanon shrinks to around 0.034%.

Maronites

The Maronites are the largest Eastern Church in Lebanon. Maronite communion with the Roman Catholic Church was established in 1182, broken thereafter, and formally reestablished in the sixteenth century. In accordance with the terms of union, they retain their own rites and canon law and use Arabic and Aramaic in their liturgy as well the Karshuni script with old Syriac letters. Their origins are uncertain.

In the late seventh century, as a result of persecutions from other Christians for the heterodox views they had adopted, the Maronites withdrew from the coastal regions into the mountainous areas of Lebanon and Syria. During the Ottoman era (1516-1914) they remained isolated and relatively independent in these areas. Later on, clashes began between them and the Druzes. The conflict led France to send a military expedition to the area in 1860. The disagreements diminished in intensity only after the establishment of the Mandate and a political formula whereby all sects achieved a degree of political representation.

Most Maronites have historically been rural people, but are also scattered throughout the country. The urbanized Maronites reside in East Beirut and its suburbs. The Maronite sect has traditionally occupied the highest stratum of the social pyramid in Lebanon. They occupy many leadership roles and are heavily involved the political realm of the country.

The Maronite Patriarchate reports 545 congregations with as many as 370,200 members and over 570,000 affiliates. The report of the group in 1990 showed 850 congregations and 575,000 members in 1980.

Melchite Catholic Patriarchate

The Church claims 198 congregations with 61,622 members in 2000. The group had counted 96,000 members in 1970.

Greek Catholics

The Greek Catholics emerged as a distinct group in the early eighteenth century when they split from the Greek Orthodox Church. Although they fully accept Catholic doctrines as defined by the Vatican, they have generally remained close to the Greek Orthodox Church, retaining more of the ancient rituals and customs than have the Maronites. They use Arabic and follow the Byzantine rite.

In Lebanon, when one speaks of Catholics, one is referring to this group, not to Roman Catholics or the Maronites. They are typically very educated and reside in Beirut, Zahle, and the suburbs of Sidon.

Roman Catholics

Catholics who accept the full primacy of the Holy See and follow the Latin rite comprised less than 1 percent of the population in the 1980s. The Lebanese refer to them as Latins. As Roman Catholics, they acknowledge the supreme authority of the Pope in Rome, venerate the Virgin Mary and the saints, and recognize the seven sacraments such as baptism, confirmation, the Eucharist (the sacrament of the Lord's Supper), confession and penance, ordination, matrimony, and anointing of the sick.

This Catholic group claims 9 congregations with over 5600 members and as many as 10,000 adherents.

Greek Orthodox

The Greek Orthodox adhere to the Orthodox Eastern Church, which uses the Byzantine rite. The final split took place after the fall of Constantinople in 1096. From that time, with the exception of a brief period of reunion in the fifteenth century, the Eastern Church has continued to reject the claim of the Roman patriarchate to universal supremacy, and has also rejected the concept of papal infallibility. In present-day Lebanon, the Greek Orthodox has become increasingly urbanized, and forms a major part of the commercial and professional class of Beirut and other cities. Many are also found in the southeast and north, near Tripoli. They are both highly educated and well versed in finance.

Jacobites

The Jacobites or Syrian Monophysites, often referred to as the Syrian Orthodox Church, take their name from Jacob Baradeus who spread the teachings of the church throughout Syria in the sixth century. The doctrinal position of the Jacobites is that after the incarnation, Christ had only one divine nature. This is contrary to the orthodox Christian position that states Christ had both a human and divine nature.

The Syrian Orthodox Church has 4 congregations and over 5000 members.

Armenian Orthodox or Gregorian

The Gregorian Church was organized in the third century. In the sixth century it modified the formulations of the Council of Chalcedon of 451 that confirmed the dual nature of Christ in one person. Instead the Gregorian Church adopted a form of Monophysitism that believes in the single divine nature of Christ, a belief which is slightly different from the belief of the Copts and the Syrian Orthodox Church. It has an Armenian liturgy.

The Armenians in Lebanon were refugees who had fled Turkey during and after World War I. In 1987 they resided in Beirut and its northern suburbs as well as in Anjar. They

are admired for their skills as craftsmen and diligence, which have enabled them to gain prominent economic positions. Politically, Armenians advocate compromise and moderation.

The Armenian Orthodox Church reports 11 congregations and almost 6000 members.

Assyrian or Nestorian Church

The Assyrians are the remnants of the Nestorian Church that emerged with the Christological controversies in the fifth century. The Nestorians, who have a Syriac liturgy, stressed that Christ consisted of two separate persons, one human and one divine, as opposed to having two natures in one person. Their doctrine was condemned by the Council of Ephesus in 431 A.D. Subsequently, those Nestorians who accepted this doctrine formed an independent church, which has only a few thousand members in Lebanon.

Non-Christians Sectarian Group

Jehovah Witnesses

Jehovah Witnesses claim 70 congregations with 3529 members. The total number of adherents (members and those with close connections with the JWs) numbers as many as 6500. According to the statistics, the Jehovah Witness's in Lebanon outnumber any Protestant or Evangelical denomination.

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Mormons)

The Mormons *have* 2 congregations and some 375 members. They show a slow but continuing gain since 1960.

Protestants/Evangelicals/Pentecostals

As seen above, the percentage of Christians in Lebanon is around 4.06% or some 13, 272. These Christians are divided into around 31 different groups. The number 14,500 Christians does not count the 3500 Jehovah Witnesses that are reported.

The Protestants in Lebanon were converted by missionaries, primarily English and American, during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. They are divided into a number of denominations, the most important being Presbyterian, Congregational, and Anglican. Typically, Lebanese Protestants are educated and belong to the professional middle class. They constitute less than 1 percent of the population and live primarily in Beirut.

The Baptist Convention has 22 congregations with some 1300 members and as many as 4500 adherents.

The National Evangelical Union has 1800 members in 4 congregations

The Church of the East reported 3 congregations and 2575 members in 2000 after having claimed 3300 members in 1960. The church is experiencing a gradual decline.

The Church of God (Anderson) reports 15 congregations with some 1300 members.

The Union of Evangelical Armenians has over 1000 members in 23 congregations. Since 1960 this group had never reported over 9 congregations but suddenly in 2000 claimed 23. The number of members has remained about the same since 1960.

The National Evangelical Synod (Presbyterian) has around 1000 members in 13 congregations. The group had 23 congregations in 1975 and in 1965 reported 1775 members. The group has lost some 10 congregations and 775 members.

The Seventh Day Adventists have 5 congregations with around 500 members. This group reported 13 congregations and over 1000 members in 1970.

The National Evangelical Alliance reports 4 congregations with over 330 members. These churches are affiliated with the CMA.

The Christian Brethren report 5 congregations with some 350 members

Assemblies of God have 3 congregations with just under 200 members.

The Muslim Background Believers Church has 50 congregations with over 2500 members. The group has continued since 1960.

Sources: <http://www.photius.com/countries/lebanon/society/index.html>; *Operation World*

People Groups

11810

Alawites (105,101)

According to some sources, they were originally Nusayrīya, a sect that broke ties with Twelver Shiites in the 9th century. The Alawites trace their origins to the eleventh Shia Imam, Hasan al Askari (d.873), and his pupil Ibn Nusayr (d.868). Ibn Nusayr proclaimed himself the Bāb "Door" (representative) of the 11th Imam. The sect seems to have been organised by a follower of Ibn Nusayr's known as al-Khasibi who died in Aleppo in about 969. Al-Khasibi's grandson al-Tabarani moved to Latakia on the Syrian coast. There he refined the Nusayrī religion and, with his pupils, converted much of the local population.

Muslims in Syria and Lebanon consider them to be legitimate Muslims, but many other Muslim countries look at them as being a heretical group. According to Alawite tradition, they came from God, and their religion is what Mohammad and Ali taught. Their name means 'follower of Ali'. They have had a long history of persecution. Ibn Taymiyya, the founder of Wahhabism,

issued a fatwa against stating that they were not to be trusted and considered to be greater infidels than Jews or Christians. Alawites follow the five pillars to Islam, but add two more which are Jihad and worship of Ali. They consider Ali to be part of a Trinity of Allah. They are a very secretive group and do not like for their rituals or teachings to be known by non-believers. They are heavy believers of astrology and believe that the stars in the sky are deified souls of believers.

They are less than 2% evangelized.

Source: <http://www.muslimhope.com/Alawites.htm>, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alawite>

Assyrian (1,115)

11812

They are part of the Nestorian church. There are some evangelical resources available to them such as the Jesus Film, but they are less than 2% evangelized.

11818

Christian (1,212,000)

There are many Lebanese that call themselves Christian, but that means they were born into an orthodox Lebanese family that has a tradition of belonging to one of the Christian churches in Lebanon. Many who call themselves Christians may know the traditions of the Lebanese church, but may not have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. These people often prefer to be called Phoenicians. According to peoplegroups.org, they are less than 2% evangelized.

11815

Druze (252,500)

In Lebanon, Syria and Israel, the Druze have official recognition as a separate religious community with its own religious court system. Their symbol is represented by five colors: green for the “Universal Mind”, red for the “Universal Soul”, yellow for the “Truth/Word”, blue for the “Antagonist/Cause”, and white for the “Protagonist/Effect”.

Although often politically recognized as Muslims, most Druze do not consider themselves Muslims, since they are not followers of the five pillars of Islam.

Gospel recordings are available to the Druze a radio broadcast as well. They are less than 2% evangelized, but there has been a church planting movement started within the past two years.

11816

Iraqi Arab (12,738)

They have migrated Iraq for various reasons such as employment and escaping harsh living conditions. They adhere to the religion of Islam and are less than 2% evangelized. The Jesus Film is available to them and also the Bible, Gospel recordings, and a radio broadcast.

11820

Kurmanji (15,766)

They are a Kurdish group found in Beirut, Sidon, Tripoli, and Biqa Valley. They are less than 2% evangelized. The Jesus Film is available in their tongue. There are Gospel recordings available and so is the Bible.

42760

Palestinian Arab (386,393)

The Palestinian Arabs migrated to Lebanon as refugees to escape the war in Israel. Many live in cramped refugee camps, in poor living conditions. The refugee camps are like cities themselves with schools, markets, and a judicial court. Many are without hope of ever leaving these camps. They are less than 2% evangelized, with a Christian radio broadcast and some Gospel recordings.

22026

Shiite (1,366,313)

There is a large Shiite group present in Lebanon that has a strong level of influence in the political realm. They are less than 2% evangelical, but there is a small local church planting movement present among the Shiite group.

22028

Sunni (868,450)

This is the other popular major Muslim group present in Lebanon. They hold the position of prime minister in the Lebanese government. They are less than 2% evangelized. There is a Christian radio broadcast available to them, but no visible church planting movement.

11823

Turk (3,347)

The Turks that are present in Lebanon are predominately Muslim that have mainly come to Lebanon for employment purposes. They are currently less than 2% evangelical, with no visible church planting movement. The Bible and Jesus Film are available to them.

00000

Americans (3,300)

Many of the Americans who live in Lebanon are either studying there or are working with a company. Many are considered to be well off. They tend to live in their own communities or where other foreigners reside. They are considered to be highly evangelized.

00000

Egyptian Arab (59,000)

Many who live in Lebanon are there seeking employment opportunities. Many of them also leave behind their families in Egypt and see them on the holidays. They save up their earnings and send it back home to their families. They are considered to be an unreached people group and have very few believers.

00000

Levantine Arab (2,401,000)

These are the Arabs that come from the Middle East such as Jordan, Palestine, and Iraq. Many of them have come to Lebanon to seek employment opportunities or a better lives for themselves. Many can be of a poorer class and live in not so good conditions. They are considered to be unevangelized and no know church planting movement.

00000

Syrian Arab (87,000)

There are may Syrian Arabs who live in Lebanon seeking a better life for themselves and employment. They are predominately a Sunni Muslim group and very few known Christians among this group.

00000

Armenian (168,000)

Armenians have a strong Christian Orthodox background. Many profess to be Christians because they come from Christian families that goes back generations. Many Armenians have left their country to escape political turmoil and poor living conditions. There is currently an active church planting movement within these people.

00000

British (1,200)

The British that are present in Lebanon are either seeking employment opportunities or are students. They tend to be wealthy and work for major corporations or work for their own government. Many are nominal believers.

00000

Chaldean, Neo-Aramaic (18,000)

They come from Iraq and speak a modern Aramaic or Syriac language. They used to be part of the Assyrian Church of the East, but because of a schism that split the church, they joined the Roman Catholic Church and became members of the Eastern Rite Chaldean Catholic Church. Many have left Iraq seeking a better life for themselves. There is a church plating movement among this group that is growing and reproducing.

00000

Deaf (Unknown)

There isn't much known about this group and not much data available on them. They are considered to be unreached.

00000

French (16,000)

Many French who live in Lebanon are either working or are studying in Lebanon. They are most likely are considered to be wealthy and live where other foreigners live. They are nominal Catholics, but for the most part do not practice Christianity. There is a growing trend toward believing in atheism or in Near Eastern religions such as Buddhism. There are pockets of French who are accepting Christ and forming fellowships.

00000

Greek (3,300)

The Greeks that are present in Lebanon have come to seek employment opportunities and a better life for themselves. Many are part of the Greek Orthodox Church and follow its traditions. There is a growing Protestant movement amongst them. There is an accelerating number of new fellowships that are forming within the Greek community.

00000

Italian (3,300)

Many have come to seek job opportunities for themselves. They are predominately a Roman Catholic group. There is a large church planting movement amongst this group.

00000

Jew (100)

There is a small Jewish population in Lebanon and are discriminated against by some of the Lebanese communities. They are not evangelized and have no church planting movement amongst this group.

00000

Syrian Jew (50)

There is a small Jewish population in Lebanon and are discriminated against by some of the Lebanese communities. They are not evangelized and have no church planting movement amongst this group.

00000

Portuguese (1,500)

There are many who live in Lebanon for job opportunities. Many claim to be part of the Christian faith, but they are mostly nominal believers.

00000

Spaniard (1,500)

They come from strong Catholic backgrounds, but many that come from this generation deny the beliefs of the Catholic church and consider it to be part of their ancestors not to be believed for today. Many who live in Lebanon have come to seek job opportunities.

Missiological Implications

1. Evangelical Christians should mount a vast prayer initiative for the peoples of Lebanon. The few Evangelical Christians are under constant pressure. The various Muslim groups have no power binding them together.
2. Evangelical Christians should pray for and work toward a full normalization of political relationship between Lebanon and Israel without direct support of the State of Israel. This effort should include seeking a principle of reciprocity for Christians living in Muslim

lands. Christians should seek freedom for Christians in Muslim lands on the same line that Muslims have in Western societies.

3. Evangelical Christians should train people in methods of sharing the Good News with followers of Islam. The Christian movement should seek and people who will move into Muslim territories, Lebanon and other Islamic areas, to share the Gospel
4. Evangelical Christians should support and aid those seeking to train leaders for the Lebanese Churches. Evangelical Christians should seek ways to cooperate in the task of training workers.
5. Evangelical Christians should seek ways to meet the tremendous physical needs and the continuing trauma resulting from wars, persecution, and shortages.
6. Evangelical Christians should develop direct ways to contact and evangelize Lebanese citizens who leave the country for better and safer opportunities.
7. Evangelical Christians should seek to help the victims of the political situation in Lebanon to find peace with each other and begin to rebuild their nation.
8. Evangelical Christians should seek ways to aid the existing Christians and Churches to move forward in their own spiritual development as well as begin to share the Message with their fellow Lebanese.
9. Evangelical Christians should seek ways to introduce a viable witness to the many nominal Muslims and others who follow a more Traditional Religion pattern.
10. Evangelical Christians should make the most of what freedom of religions exists in Lebanon.

Pictures

Links –

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lebanon>

<http://www.destinationlebanon.gov.lb/eng/index.asp>

<http://rs6.loc.gov/frd/cs/lbtoc.html>

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