

*The righteous flourish like the palm tree,
And grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Psalm 92:12*

These words took root in the soil of my soul this summer when I had the privilege of joining a mission team from several CBFNC churches who joined Linda Jones, CBFNC Missions Coordinator, to participate in a week of ministry and celebration in Lebanon. After a 19-hour flight, CBF National missionaries to the Middle East, Chaouki and Maha Boulos, put us to work immediately the next morning traveling from church to church in preparation for the Celebrate Jesus festival that the Boulos and other local Christian leaders had been arranging for months. Despite years of turmoil between the nation of Israel to the south and Muslims and Christian groups in Lebanon, we were a part of a group of Evangelical Christians holding a public gathering in downtown Beirut celebrating Jesus Christ! For five consecutive evenings, the Gospel was sung, proclaimed, and received. Numbers of individuals accepted Christ including those from other faith traditions. Amazingly, these festivals have also been taking place in Egypt and Jordan since 2000 under the leadership of the Boulos and their volunteers.

Our days were filled with visits, ministry activities and sightseeing. Remarkably, Chaouki had arranged for our team to visit with Lebanon's national police director, Lebanon's highest military court judge, as well as religious and political



leaders from the Druze faith tradition. We shared Turkish coffee, wonderful food, conversation, and initiated cross-cultural friendships. Part of our team visited an orphanage to consider possible mission efforts while others led basketball camps. We toured the retreat center that the Boulos are building for use by groups from across the Middle East. It is an amazingly modern facility atop a mountain range overlooking the Mediterranean Sea. Sightseeing included a visit to the ancient city of Byblos where the Bible reports craftsmen were imported to build the Jerusalem Temple. My mountain top moment was when we traveled to the summit of Mount Lebanon and I stood under the branches of a 2,000-year-old cedar. If you get a chance, go and see what God is doing in the region of Tyre and Sidon.

You may want to put down roots.

If interested in giving to this ministry or going on a mission trip, contact Linda Jones ljones@cbfnc.org.

2011 CBFNC Disaster Relief Efforts

by Kent Benfield

2011 has been a prolific year for disasters across America. Here in North Carolina we were impacted twice: April's tornadoes brought devastation throughout central and eastern NC, and August's Hurricane Irene wreaked havoc mostly in eastern NC. The CBFNC Disaster Relief Trailer was put into use in the aftermath of each.

Utilizing the NC Baptist Men's coordination efforts, a team from Lindley Park Church in Greensboro traveled to Raleigh and performed chainsaw work at two different homes. We were fortunate to have additional help from a group from Midland, as



huge trees proved quite a challenge.

We also sent a group to New Bern in September to remove flooring, sheetrock, and debris from a home which had also been flooded/rebuilt after Hurricane Isabel in 2003. The homeowner, a retired Veteran, thanked us many times over. This area was hit hard by Irene, and it was comforting to see many faith-based groups working there.

The CBFNC disaster relief trailer and contents are available for all CBF churches to utilize. The trailer, located in Greensboro, contains generators, chainsaws, a pressure washer, and hand tools for all basic recovery work. If interested, please contact Kent Benfield at (336) 451-0669 or (336) 393-4078. A secondary contact is Scott Orr at (336) 292-5761.