

Beirut Church Takes Gospel to Fellow Arabs

✖ Amid political upheavals, protests, and the radical religiosity, the gospel is moving forward in the Middle East, thanks in no small part to one devoted church.

The Free Evangelical Church of Beirut has been shining brighter and brighter light into the Arab world since pastor Joseph took a job there in 1994, reports ReachGlobal, the international missions arm of the Evangelical Free Church of America.

The church's first mission was to establish a home for girls whose parents were either killed or unable to care for them as a result of the 15-year civil war in Lebanon. The home, Beit al Safa, or "Home of Serenity," now houses between 12 and 20 girls at a time. "It was a girls' home because we felt this was the weak element in our society," says Joseph.

Beit al Safa was the start to delving into several other areas where the Arab world could use strengthening. Joseph felt that God was calling him to move forward with the gospel not just in Beirut, Lebanon, but throughout the Middle East.

Others did not always share Joseph's mission, especially in the wake of a long and painful war. Joseph recalls, "Some of them said, 'Let's not reach out to Muslims: they were fighting with us.' They had hard feelings and were aching from the war."

God must have miraculously healed those wounds, however, because by 1998, the church was sending out missionaries.

An African man who came to study at the nearby Arab Baptist Theological Seminary was the first to leave the FECB in order to minister to another nation. He ventured back to his home

country with the support of the church to start missions work there.

Just two years later, another church member relocated to a nearby nation to teach theology and evangelize nonbelievers. Two years after that, another member did the same in another nearby country.

Two years later, a church member planted a church in a Lebanese neighborhood with a high concentration of refugees. The following year another church member relocated his family to one more Arab nation to plant churches.

This faithful body of believers hopes to continue its expansion by setting up training centers in all the countries where they have now planted churches. Training will follow the Acts 19 model of training a small group of believers daily in a lecture hall for two years.

In the midst of hectic times for the Middle East, the FECB is a like a city on a hill. They pray that the current political events would provide new opportunities for ministry and to share God's truth. Pray that the Lord would bring them new leaders and resources to train those leaders, as they continue to reach the Arab world for the kingdom.