

PROJECT CEDAR TREE

Supporting relief work amongst refugees in Lebanon

Psalm 104:16 The trees of the LORD are well watered, the cedars of Lebanon that he planted.

The Cedar tree has great significance in scripture and also shows some remarkable comparisons to the current **refugee status in Lebanon**.

On the website on *HOW TO GROW CEDAR TREES FROM SEED*¹ the following guidelines are provided that applies to PROJECT CEDAR TREE:

1. *Gardeners can grow a cedar tree from seed by collecting the small cedar cones.*
The 'seed' are multiple in Lebanon today with more than **1, 5 million** refugees from **Syria, Iraq** and **Kurdistan** living in tent camps, slums and informal dwellings. More than **90%** of these refugees are Muslims and, as people who have been forcefully uprooted and displaced, are seeking hope and peace. More than **50%** of the refugees are children with little or no hope of being educated and often working in fields to get money to pay for their dwellings. **One out of every four people** in Lebanon is a refugee and lacks the basic necessities of life. Every single 'seed' has the possibility of becoming a **CEDAR TREE** if planted and nurtured correctly

2. *Cedar trees require a cold winter to germinate.*
There is no doubt that the Middle East is going through a severe **"spiritual winter"** Lives are lost by the millions and futures are shattered by the minute as people are fleeing for their lives, mostly in search for humanity. Never before has the world witnessed so many people on the move, more than **60 million** in total, with so many stories of hardship and trauma. However, this *spiritual winter* can give birth to a **spiritual spring**. The fields are white with harvest and literally thousands are coming to Christ. *"If it wasn't for the war, I wouldn't have found Jesus"* said the one refugee. This is indeed "now or never" for the Church to seize the moment and act accordingly

3. *The cones need to be washed, dried and then crushed across a mesh screen. The seeds will separate out from the pulp. Save the seeds, and discard the pulp.*
One of the key requirements to an open heart for the Gospel of salvation, which is shared by refugees across the world, is brokenness. 60 million refugees are broken by circumstances and desperate for life. The one refugee said: *"we don't die once. In Syria we die every day."* Refugees are like seed, crushed from the security of the cone, waiting to be planted and ready to find soil suitable for growth

¹ <http://www.gardenguides.com/138200-grow-cedar-trees-seed.html>

4. *Prepare a site for planting the cedar seeds. Turn over the soil with a shovel.*

Seed needs soil and soil needs a sower. The Church in Lebanon has worked tirelessly and relentlessly amongst the refugees to prepare “soil” suitable for sharing the Gospel of Christ. They deserve all the support they can get to secure that every seed is planted, watered, nurtured and grown to maturity.

5. *Thin the seedlings out to one seedling per inch. Allow the seedlings to grow in the furrow for two to three years, then transplant the seedlings to a new site where they have room to mature.*

The Gospel is individual and relational. Every seeker needs to be attended to with redemptive and future purposes in mind. Most of the refugees the INcontext team spoke to have a vision of returning to Syria or Iraq once the war is over. The one refugee who came to know Christ in Lebanon received refugee status in Australia the day before we met him. “*I am so excited*” he said “*I can now equip myself better to go back to Syria one day to share the Gospel*”. Another young Syrian couple came to know Christ in one of the refugee camps and now plan to return home to share the hope of Christ with the people in their town. They are leaving the furrows of new life and are replanted where there will be room to mature.

May God help to use this opportunity to rebuild lives and further the Kingdom of God in *such a time as this*

PROJECT CEDAR TREE hopes to raise enough funds to assist the workers in Lebanon in the following ways:

- To provide refugees with assistance for essentials like rent and food, and skills training to improve their economic opportunities.
- To provide equipment like computers to assist new converts to start micro businesses
- To support a centre that provides a safe space for children to gather, to receive an education, and to receive emotional support and counselling.
- To provide children with creative learning and therapeutic activities to help them recover from trauma and avoid working in city streets or farm fields.
- To operate classrooms for children in the Bekaa Valley, providing instruction in a number of subjects.
- To provide school supplies, including writing materials, backpacks and textbooks.
- To provide Children’s audio Bibles, placed in teddy bears to assist traumatised children
- To provide Audio Bibles in Arabic
- To provide craft material for an art school in Beirut
- To provide a vehicle to transport aid and helpers to the refugees
- As an Emergency project for a young girl who urgently needs an operation

THE OUTCOME

The aim of PROJECT CEDAR TREE is to assist seekers into the words of *Psalm 92:12-14 The righteous will flourish like a palm tree, they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon; planted in the house of the LORD, they will flourish in the courts of our God. They will still bear fruit in old age, they will stay fresh and green,*



There are four distinct characteristics of a CEDAR TREE and this is the reason that God chose this CEDAR TREE as the analogy for a Christian's growth and experience. If we understand the four-fold purpose of the CEDARS OF LEBANON, we will understand the four-fold vision of this project.

1. *The CEDAR TREE grows downward.*

it takes time to grow downward, and it is an absolute necessity for cedars of Lebanon because the cedars of Lebanon grew up on the top of the rocky mountains where there was not a great deal of soil so they had to be deeply rooted.

Refugees who come to know Christ will face many challenges and will have to be securely implanted and deeply rooted in Christ. Audio Bibles will be of great assistance in this regard and also assisting new believers to integrate into society by assisting them in micro business projects.

2. *The CEDAR TREE grows upward.*

The CEDARS OF LEBANON grows taller than most other trees and becomes a beacon for all to see.

Refugees who come to know Christ are standing tall in their communities. The INcontext team met some refugees who came to know Christ and are now part of a team that distributed food and also care for the children. They have become beacons of light amongst their own people

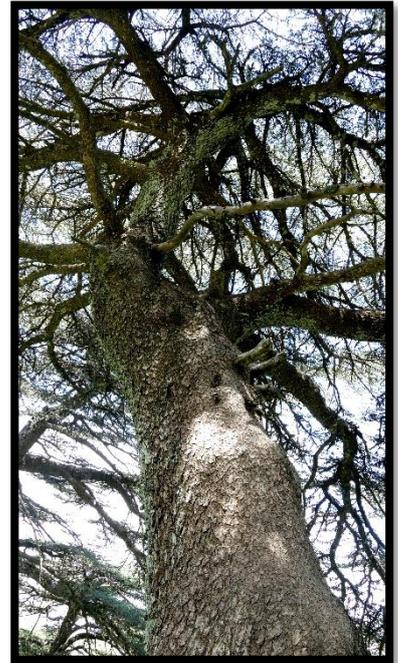
3. *The CEDAR TREE grows outward.*

The CEDAR TREE grows into a large shade tree. The tree was the shadowing shroud for all of the animals that left the heat of the day and came beneath the boughs of the cedar tree. The cedar tree was made a shadowing shroud for all of the birds of the air to come and take their place in the branches of the tree. Refugees who found Christ has become a place of refuge for other refugees.

4. *The CEDAR TREE emits a fragrant smell*

The pine cones of the CEDAR TREE, when crushed, gives out an amazing sweet smell

Refugees who come to know Christ are able to identify with those around them who suffered the same hardship and trauma.



Should have any further questions regarding this project, please contact Gustav Krös: gustav@incontextministries.org or 021 976 1465

To make a financial contribution, please make use of the following bank account details and use **CEDAR and your email address** within your reference:

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