

THE JOSHUA FUND™

report

INSIDE

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Fall 2011

A Summer Work Project in Israel

BY JOEL C. ROSENBERG



The Joshua Fund helped distribute food to Holocaust survivors and about 15 pallets of food and hygiene items to those in need.

Helping Christian parents bless Israel in real and practical ways and passing that love

for Jews and Arabs on to the next generation is a real passion of The Joshua Fund team. As the Psalmist says, "We will... tell to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and His strength and His wondrous works that He has done. For He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which He commanded our fathers that they should teach them to their children." (*Psalm 78:4-5*) That's why we lead "Prayer & Vision Tours." That's why we include hands-on relief projects as part of the tours. That's also why this summer, Lynn and I and our boys were so excited to be able to work with another wonderful Christian family during a two-week prayer and work project together in Israel.

Up North, we helped one of The Joshua Fund's allies with much needed improvements to their bomb shelter. In the summer of 2006, about 20 people lived in the shelter for 38 days while their city was pounded with rockets from Lebanon. Given how dirty and sweltering the shelter was, it was hard to imagine enduring five weeks in there. So with kids ranging from

age seven to seventeen, we swept and scrubbed, removed dilapidated furniture, painted for hours, and prayed for peace.

We had a great time working in TJF's warehouse with our Israeli staff, packing about 15 pallets of food and hygiene items to be sent to various storefronts. We took the kids to distribute food to Holocaust survivors, single mothers, and struggling families. Sometimes these folks would come to storefronts TJF partners with and we would fill up bags with rice, flour, pasta, tuna, beans, toilet paper, and other staples and give it to them. Other times, we would do "home deliveries."

Lynn and I visited an Ethiopian Jewish lady who had been deserted by her husband and left with seven kids after arriving in Israel. They live in a very small apartment and the children did not have any beds. By God's grace, the storefront TJF partners with in this particular community had been so moved by the woman's situation that they built bunk beds for the kids. Both the mom and the kids were amazed and encouraged by this act of love. In fact, when we arrived to bring them their monthly packages

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Amazing Courage

Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.
— Isaiah 41:10

In the midst of the historic turmoil we witnessed unfolding during the ‘Arab Spring’ of 2011, we at The Joshua Fund took great comfort from knowing that the Lord has also set us on a course to come alongside our brothers and sisters in Egypt and Iraq to strengthen the Body of Christ.

Following are some specifics in how your prayerful and financial support has allowed The Joshua Fund to strengthen and help His church in these trying and critical times.



Participants are encouraged and refreshed at a past training conference. ►

EGYPT Church Planting Conferences

This spring we enabled three church-planting conferences to be held in Egypt. Each effort placed strong ministry teams on the ground in coordination with local churches. The training equipped each local team with a plan and vision for reaching Muslims and nominal Christians with the Gospel, as well as to plant mature local churches in villages that currently have no Gospel witness.

The Egyptian participants were trained in effective ways to reach Muslims with the Gospel. They were also discipled in gathering new believers into small groups which we pray will eventually develop into self-sustaining, reproducing house churches.

Just prior to this conference, an article released by The Economist reported that over 80% of Egyptians polled believe that if a Muslim converts to Christianity they should receive the death penalty (*The Economist*, August 6, 2011). Regardless of the pressure and fear this knowledge could cause in these wonderful brothers and sisters - over 300 leaders attended the training. They left with a new commitment for sharing Jesus with Muslims and launching churches. Nine of these leaders had previously been imprisoned for sharing the Gospel with Muslims, yet this has neither discouraged nor stopped them. Taking even a few moments to consider that this level of obedience and commitment was being expressed in the midst of a time of radical national uncertainty is humbling and convicting. Would you please commit to continually praying for our courageous brothers and sisters to fulfill the calling the Lord has placed on them?

Pastors and Leaders Conference

The Lord also gave The Joshua Fund an opportunity to advance another effort to equip Egyptians for ministry. You've helped us sponsor a Pastors and Leaders Conference aimed at equipping Egyptian leaders to better shepherd their flocks - by providing them instruction in the Inductive Bible Study method.

This gathering was scheduled for February, 2011, but due to the instability during the revolution in Egypt, it had to be postponed until, October 2011. Of course, the Lord has used this apparent “delay” for His own glory. In January there had been 105 pastors and ministry leaders participating; but there will now be 135 locals attending!

The teaching focus will be on First Peter, so that in addition to learning this method of study itself,

leaders will be soaking up the rich truths the Lord has for them here. There will also be a strong emphasis placed on the marriage and family relationship and a healthy Biblical model of what that is supposed to look like for followers of Jesus Christ. This is a deeply needed instruction in a land that's so steeped in Muslim thinking and living. Our brothers and sisters need to have their minds renewed so they can properly reflect the Glory of the Lord to their desperate nation.

These Egyptian brothers are now seeking the Lord in prayer about possibly holding an evangelistic conference geared towards unbelievers later in the year. This is a very bold step of obedience at this moment in the history of the Egyptian nation, but also a truly Biblical one. Please join us in praying for wisdom, discernment, protection, financial provision, and Spirit-led preparation and execution. We know the believers in Egypt are counting on your prayers for strength and security as they have faced so many challenges.

Children's Home

The ministry that The Joshua Fund is standing with in Egypt is also establishing a Children's Home. We have had the opportunity of helping them with a van for transportation. We also desire to help them as they get the Children's Home facility established in a very hostile environment to Christianity.

They face great difficulty in establishing this Children's Home. The police can be very suspicious of the work they are doing and can prove to be an adamant foe. They have also had people stealing from them and plotting against them. Thank you for praying for this critical ministry effort.

IRAQ

Ministry Leadership Conferences / October 2011

God has also clearly opened doors for The Joshua Fund to help stand with and encourage persecuted believers in the country of Iraq. We have been able to sponsor a much needed moment of refreshment by bringing a Leadership Training Conference to the Northern region of Iraq.

Even as the team prepares to depart the US for this effort, there is renewed ethnic unrest in Iraq, with many ethnic groups giving place to their longstanding fear, hatred and mistrust of one another. With this local violence as a backdrop, the conference will focus on teaching, and instructing Iraqi pastors and leaders through each verse of Paul's 1 and 2 letters to Timothy. The plan is for the team to visit a city, located on the Iraq and Iran border, where local pastors and their church leadership will attend the week-long gathering.

Many new leaders and ministry workers are being drawn into God's kingdom among the fellowships throughout Iraq and the surrounding region. As one pastor from Baghdad has challenged us in the past, "...please come and help us train our people to be followers of Jesus!"

Thank you for enabling The Joshua Fund to do just that, and we ask that you please keep this critical effort covered in prayer.

GIVE



Reaching Out into the Communities

Patiently Listening to the Whispers of God

"It seems to me that what God wants for us to do, apart from just supplying families with food, is to really adopt them in His name, and care for them in the spiritual sense at least as much as in the material sense."

After praying and pondering, The Joshua Fund warehouse team decided to serve a small group of people living in the nearby community, door-to-door, because that seemed to provide the best ground for planting real relationships. On February 24, 2011, we picked, bagged and distributed our first batch of food packages.

As the outreach began, we quickly learned that many homes in the community we were serving have two address numbers — most of the families we serve only know their location based on their "old number." Sometimes, we found two numbers on the same building: A "new" number 4 on a sign and an "old" number 1220 spray-painted somewhere on a wall. We also spent some effort going up and down four stories in the wrong building and then again in the right one. It's not bad when that happens, since God counts every bead of sweat, and also, it helps us convey that because He really cares, we really care.

When people thank us for the food we distribute, we tell them that the food all belongs to God. Sometimes it makes me wonder: The Joshua Fund pays for the food, as well as the van to transport the goods, the gas, and even our time as a staff. So what can we, the individual distributors, really give? A lot, it turns out.

As the "hands" of the distribution, we can allow our lives to be truly affected by the people that God is letting us serve. We can give a piece of our heart to families that have more pressure than they can contain on their own. A listening ear may be all that is needed to help people who have painful stories to share. A blind, diabetic woman, who lost her

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Reaching Out CONTINUED

husband to cancer, as well as the family's savings and income, told us that even though we had no solution, she feels good just because she has someone to listen to her story. We serve poor people, who live in a world where no money typically means no respect. We can honor these people and remind them that they were made by God's fingers, designed by His mind, remembered in His heart.

One recipient seemed so sharp and focused over the phone, that at first I wondered whether she really needed our help. When we visited, she invited us to sit down. Her daughter awoke and she went to get her. At first the daughter seemed sleepy, slowly waking up on her mother's lap. Seeing that we were waiting for the daughter's attention, the mother explained that her 3-year old daughter is blind. She also can't walk or talk. Her baby suffers from cerebral paralysis and the doctors didn't think she would ever even move on her own. It was hard not to think of my own daughter at home, and how life would be if she had not been blessed with such good health. We began to realize some of the reasons for our hostess' mix of a clear, sharp mind, gratefulness, her "despite-of-something" joy, and the feeling of brokenness in the air. She was very thankful and invited us to visit again, with or without a food pack.

The welfare office told us of one needy woman who suffers from Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, dementia and depression. We prayed that we would be able to bring this lady some joy during our visit. She was half sleeping, half sitting on a couch. The entire time we were there, she stayed in that position on the couch, barely able to lift herself up to an almost-sitting position. She seemed to find it hard to even open her eyes and her speech was slurred. It was clear she was very depressed, so we asked her if we could pray for her. During the prayer, she really lit up. She was delighted, saying "Amen" throughout the prayer. She said to us, "You have been engraved on my heart." She was clearly still suffering, but she was also smiling. Exactly what we asked God for—to bring her some joy. She hasn't pick up our calls lately, so we dropped by on a distribution, only to find that her place appears to have been cleaned out by someone. We called the welfare office and found out that she has been hospitalized. We are anxious to hear how she is and are trying to arrange a visit with her in the hospital, if possible.

"God really loves you and cares for you" is the essence of what we wish to convey to the families we help. He watches over them around the clock. He created food for them to consume, and even sent us to deliver it to their door. As we play our little role in a small scene in their lives, we try to carefully add a clear and accurate subtitle "This pack is from God. He remembers you all the time. We're just delivering. But we really care about you too."

CONTINUED FROM COVER

of food, they insisted not only that we come in and visit for awhile, but that we come into their bedroom so we could see the bunk beds for ourselves!

Another time, our 11-year old son Jonah and I went with TJF's warehouse manager to visit an Israeli Jewish man who had become nearly paralyzed in a terrible traffic accident. He and his wife and young child had a small apartment with very few furnishings. The man could no longer work because of the accident. He didn't seem bitter, but he and his wife were certainly saddened by all that had happened. What an honor it was not simply to bring them bags of much-needed food and household supplies, but also to sit with them, talk with them, listen to them, and even pray for them.

Lynn's personal highlight was spending over an hour with a Jewish woman whose husband left her with six kids. "She had a lot of questions about why we do what we do," Lynn told us. "I got to share my love for Jewish people. I also got to use my Hebrew and she understood me!"

We spent time praying for and caring for Arab families, as well. One day, for example, Lynn and members of the other family with us, volunteered with a wonderful Christian ministry that brings Muslim kids to Israel from Iraq and Gaza who desperately need open heart surgery. The kids come with a parent (usually their moms) to live in a Christian community in Jerusalem while surgeries are performed by Israeli doctors. Our group took three Muslim kids and their moms to the park. One was a 15-year old boy from Iraq and the boys enjoyed playing soccer with him, talking with him, and praying for him.

Thanks so much for your faithful prayer and financial support for The Joshua Fund. You are helping us care for the needy in Israel.



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DESIGNATED GIVING

All contributions are tax deductible in the USA. If The Joshua Fund is successful in raising our financial goal for a specific project for which you have designated your donations, all excess funds for that project will be applied to related projects or to the general fund of TJF.

We are a member of the ECFA (Evangelical Council on Financial Accountability) which was founded in 1979. The ECFA provides accreditation to Christian non-profit organizations that faithfully demonstrate compliance with the ECFA Standards pertaining to financial accountability, fund-raising and board governance.

