

# STORIES FROM THE FIELD

*Stories from the Field features testimonies and articles from The Joshua Fund's staff and ministry partners about the ongoing work of blessing Israel and her neighbors in the name of Jesus*

📍 | ISRAEL

## SHARING GOD'S LOVE

**JEREMY GRAFMAN**

*Director of Special Projects*

**A**s we drove together through the Israeli countryside, I was amazed at the day. Along with more than 40 Russian-speaking, recent immigrants to Israel, we had shared a day filled with touring biblical sites, teaching from the Scriptures and hearing a passionate, effective presentation of the Gospel from our Russian-speaking pastor. A bus tour is a creative and effective way to

get to know and minister to people the vital truths of God directly from the Scriptures.

Spending this day enjoying all that the Lord was doing left me reflecting on the wide variety of methods for presenting the Good News that are occurring throughout Israel and the West Bank. The Joshua Fund is privileged to encourage and enable the sharing of God's truth in direct partnership with local pastors, evangelists and other gifted ministry workers. Our approach in working with local ministry leaders is to assist believers in reaching out to their communities in their local language and enabling them to develop relationships. As these relationships flourish and grow, believers will have the opportunity to share their faith in Jesus Christ and perhaps disciple new believers in the faith.

As you read this handful of individual glimpses below, would you take time to thank the Lord with us? Let's praise Him for these multi-faceted examples of His grace being poured through His children in

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# MY INSIGHTS FROM ISRAEL

**This August we celebrate three years of living in the land of Israel as new citizens. We have been studying the language, navigating everything from travel soccer to hospital emergency rooms, building new relationships and establishing our family in our local congregation. It has been a real joy to find ways to personally serve the believers here in Israel and learn more about the needs of this complex land. Adjusting to life here has been a challenge and a continuing education. We are learning to pray more specifically for the obstacles Israelis face.**



## FROM THE FOUNDER

JOEL C. ROSENBERG

Being a Jewish believer in Israel is not easy, as many face rejection and/or persecution from their families, friends and society. There is a spiritual darkness, an extra hardness toward the gospel that can feel oppressive. Many young people face demonic attack in their unbelieving homes. The culture in the army is extremely challenging, and many come out of their service traumatized by the promiscuity and pressures in addition to any physical dangers and stress. Young believers often feel they did not stand strong in this atmosphere, gave into temptations and are spiritual failures. Our country is also full of people still recovering from the trauma of the Holocaust. Children and grandchildren of survivors often have been raised in very dysfunctional homes.

Young believers from every background need to be welcomed into community and begin a process of very intentional discipleship if they are not to feel isolated. For new believers, everything in their world has been turned upside down, and they need to know they are not alone and not “crazy.” Each person needs to experience forgiveness, understanding and acceptance into the family of God.

It is exciting to see the many ways the believing community is reaching out to disciple new believers and young people. There are regular national conferences and events for youth, for soldiers and for young adults. One Joshua Fund ministry partner offers a one-year study program that gives young people a solid foundation in their faith. Several ministries have designed special discipleship programs for young people about to enter their military service and for those just ending their time in the Israel Defense Forces. These are crucial times to equip and encourage young people to stand firm in their faith. Of course, it is our prayer that the congregations in the land continue to grow strong and healthy and walk alongside new believers in their midst. With four sons, we have been deeply and personally grateful for these ministries that have welcomed, equipped and encouraged them.

### PRAY

**Will you join us in praying that the Lord will birth a renewed focus on discipleship in the congregations and new endeavors to do so effectively? What an honor and responsibility it is to spiritually parent new children of God. We must hold these servants up in prayer and ask the Lord of the harvest to raise up still more.**



so many creative and meaningful ways. We hope it renews your zeal as we continue to join with the Lord, faithfully co-laboring to fulfill our own unique roles.

***"For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost." - Luke 19:10***

Throughout the year, holiday-based outreaches provide many Israeli and West Bank believers with occasions to open their homes to neighbors and friends. Jewish celebrations and feasts, such as Passover and Succot, as well as Christian celebrations of Christmas and Easter, which are celebrated among Arab believers in the region, often provide a chance for the Word of God to be shared with those who don't know the Lord personally. There are also more coordinated events where congregations, churches or local ministries gather to draw the community together to share a time of feasting, biblical teaching and true worship. While some efforts focus on those from specific backgrounds, such as Holocaust survivors, or Russian or Arabic speakers from nominal Christian backgrounds, many have come to know the Messiah through spending time among His people as well as through the resulting longer-term relationships that our brothers and sisters seek to cultivate.

Each Mother's Day, celebrated in Israel on the first day of spring, there is a special outreach that gathers over 800 Arabic-speaking women from both Christian and Muslim backgrounds to honor and encourage women in their roles within their families. Can you imagine how this effort shines as a 'flower in the desert' when set against a culture where the women's God intended role is often obscured?

Many attend the gathering with their own mothers or daughters and are deeply touched, as they are taught from the Scriptures, ministered to and prayed for personally by the believers in attendance. This single event each spring provides a tremendous opportunity for the believing women who organize and host the celebration to cultivate and develop relationships throughout the year. No small number of women are entering the Kingdom through the love of God that is displayed!

**“AS YOU READ THIS HANDFUL OF INDIVIDUAL GLIMPSES, WOULD YOU TAKE TIME TO THANK THE LORD WITH US? LET'S PRAISE HIM FOR THESE MULTI-FACETED EXAMPLES OF HIS GRACE BEING POURED THROUGH HIS CHILDREN IN SO MANY CREATIVE AND MEANINGFUL WAYS.”**



How many of you first came to Christ at a Christian camp or young people's ministry gathering? Because this remains such an impactful moment for so many, The Joshua Fund continues promoting, encouraging and strengthening many ministry efforts in Israel that seek to bring young Israelis from believing families face to face with their own personal need for the Messiah. So often, those whose parents are believers are being challenged to make their faith their own at camps, retreats and ministry gatherings where powerful teaching from the Word of God takes place. Perhaps a less familiar voice is speaking truth to them, or maybe they come from a church or congregation where the truths of Scripture are less clearly proclaimed. In any case, we remain so encouraged that the Holy Spirit faithfully touches these young men and women. Please keep praying with us for their salvation and effective discipling. [PG. 5](#) ▶

# REMEMBERING OUR BEGINNINGS

## JOEL & LYNN ROSENBERG

*Founders of The Joshua Fund*

On June 14th of 2006, a small group of us gathered in our home to sign the paperwork and officially begin The Joshua Fund, to bless Israel and her neighbors in the name of Jesus. We gathered there with a few trusted friends who had already been praying and serving together in the Epicenter for several years. As our first board of directors was founded that night, we expectantly asked the Lord to use us in a new way to be a part of what He was doing.

It is amazing to look back and see God's faithfulness since then. Psalm 32:8 says, "I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go; I will counsel you with My eye upon you." And in Jeremiah 33:3 we read, "Call to Me and I will answer you, and I will tell you great and mighty things, which you do not know." He has done great things!

Joel had been writing books since 2001 and the novels were generating an ever-growing interest from American and Canadian Christians who wanted to invest their resources to bless Israel and her neighbors. We began with two specific financial gifts given to us unexpectedly for the purpose of translating and freely distributing Joel's book, *The Ezekiel Option*, which has a strong gospel message, into Hebrew and Russian.

As this fledgling organization began to plan its first projects, a war in southern Lebanon erupted. While Hezbollah and Israel fought in July and August of 2006, millions of civilians on both sides endured displacement and danger.

**We sought the Lord to see how we might help bring the hope of Christ to people in distress.**

**In what became the hallmark of our approach, we found trusted and experienced believers in the region whom we could invest in, pray for and encourage.**

**The Lord has a remnant of His church even in the most difficult places, and we need to be a part of strengthening what remains (Revelation 3:2).**

By God's grace we were able to supply followers of Christ caught in the conflict with practical resources which they could use to serve their neighbors. We also sought to educate and mobilize the church in North America towards prayer for the region.

Since we began, our mission has been to "bless Israel and her neighbors in the name of Jesus." We do that by providing humanitarian aid,



strengthening local congregations and mobilizing the global church to "learn, pray, give and go" to the Epicenter.

In the letter to the Romans, chapter 16, Paul describes the amazing community that God has provided for him as: fellow workers, beloved, hard workers, approved in Christ, kinsman, brothers, sisters, chosen in the Lord, helpers, saints and servants. This is how we see the whole Joshua Fund team that God has raised up, from donors to staff to members of our board to our partners in the field.

As we move forward into the myriad of unknowns in the next ten years, let's keep clinging to what we know. God is faithful. He deeply loves Israel and her neighbors more than we ever could.

**May He alone be glorified!**





**TIM LUGBILL**  
Executive Director

## PRAY

Would you join us in praying for this Bedouin ministry right now, as well as other believers who distribute Joshua Fund food packs to nearly 3,000 families each month?

# MINISTERING HOPE AMONG THE BEDOUINS

The Joshua Fund partners each month with local congregations and ministries in Israel to help feed those who are most in need. Among the neediest and neglected in Israel are the Bedouin people. Bedouin tribes have the highest growth rate among all ethnic groups, doubling every 15 years, and represent about one in four people in Israel's Negev Desert. Bedouin husbands typically marry many women but financially support only their favorite wife and children, leaving other wives to fend for themselves – and their children.

The Joshua Fund is grateful to partner with a ministry of local Jews and Arabs dedicated to distributing food and ministering hope to these abandoned women and children.



## SHARING GOD'S LOVE CONTINUED

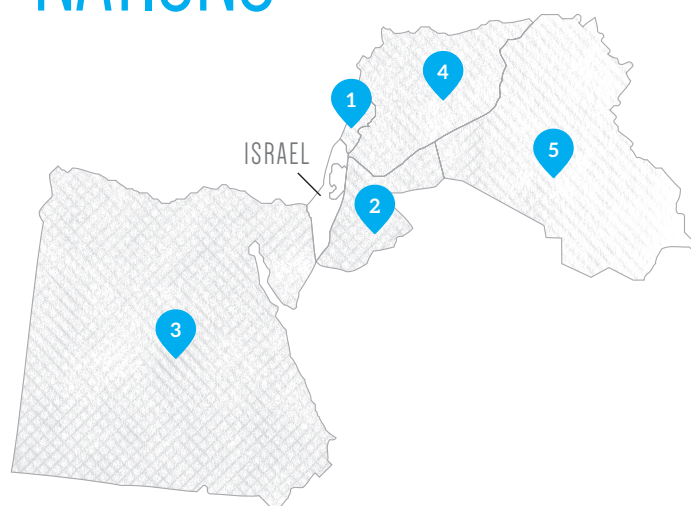
*"I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear; But now my eye sees You; Therefore I retract, and I repent in dust and ashes." - Job 42:5,6*

While we didn't really anticipate such a simple, straightforward opportunity to emerge, we were able during 2016 and 2017 to deliver over 100 high-quality English Children's Bibles to Arabic-speaking school kids who also know English but who don't yet know Jesus! What a blessing to be able to extend His words of life so directly into these young hearts and minds and into their families as well. Please pray with us that many may come to know the Lord's character and for much, lasting fruit to be born in them.

*...and (the chief priests and scribes) said to Him, "Do You hear what these children are saying?" And Jesus said to them, "Yes; have you never read, 'Out of the mouth of infants and nursing babies you have prepared praise for Yourself?'" - Matthew 21:16*

Please join us in asking the Lord to bring forth a continual harvest from this constant stream of truth that you, as our partner in the work, are helping to send forth.

# REPORTS FROM THE NEIGHBORING NATIONS



## 1 | LEBANON

Lebanon has now reached a point where almost half of the country's population consists of refugees. There is such a great need in so many capacities, especially spiritually. Pray with us and our ministry partners as we seek the Lord on how best to share the Good News in this vacuum.

One of our ministry partners in Lebanon reports, "Our advice would simply be, do not depend on oneself, rather on the Lord alone. Consider every attack a chance to get to know the Lord more and His attributes. The most important thing is to have a heart and attitude full of holiness. Let our behavior and our reactions be a redemption to this fallen world. The way I deal with God in the midst of my failures reflects how I am going to deal with Him when I am at the summit of my success. The ground of failure is the most fertile land to cultivate success. Please pray with us, visit us more often and stand by us."

## 2 | JORDAN

Jordan remains a good example of tolerance in the Muslim world. However, behind the scenes the secret police monitor much of the ministry activities within its borders. This limits the actual evangelism opportunities. Local churches are still under a "four-wall" mentality, and reaching out to the lost is scarce. Combined with any hint of conversion to Christianity, the challenges are great to reach the 98% of Jordan's population who don't know Christ. However, the refugee crisis has afforded an opportunity to reach out to these lost people.

According to a Jordanian ministry worker, "One man that we have known for a while is now a believer coming from another religious background. It has been encouraging to see his growth during our weekly meetings with him. Recently he said if he had stayed in the country he fled from, he would never have heard about Jesus. He never saw a Bible until coming here. He said anyone seen with a Bible in his town would have been killed."

## 3 | EGYPT

Egyptian Christians continue to be the primary victims of attacks from religious radicals, whose method of targeting believers in the Middle East was highlighted at the Palm Sunday church bombings. Even further attacks were conducted on innocent churchgoers traveling by bus. Overnight, the remote desert location of this vicious slaughter became the ill-famed scene that claimed the lives of 28. Although our hearts are broken for the church in Egypt, we have been blessed for years to come alongside our brothers and sisters in this ancient biblical land.

Through your gifts and prayers, The Joshua Fund has helped support a large scale discipleship program among the Egyptian youth, through a local organization and church, which gladly reported, "Thousands of high schoolers and older college-age young people in Egypt are being established in their identity as followers of Christ. From systematic Bible study and sound teaching...many in fact, are coming to faith for the first time. One key element of our program is evangelism. We want to make sure that there is a constant and continual emphasis and opportunity made for young people to make personal commitments to receive and follow Christ as their Lord and Savior. One specific time where there is always great response in commitments is the annual summer conference."





## 5 | IRAQ

Iraqi Christians by the thousands annually flee their homeland due to ongoing war, persecution and life's insecurities that have battered their country for the last two decades. Only the Lord's remnant remain, as some report that less than 30 evangelical churches continue serving in the entire country. Over the course of the last ten years, thanks to your faithful prayers and support, we have been able to encourage and equip some of those faithful church leaders who persist in the work of the Lord in this war-weary field:

"When we received word of your gift the pastors here asked why you were doing this? What is leading you to continue to support us in such a way? We are so encouraged by your love!" writes an Iraqi Pastor.

Today, through your generous gifts, we continue to stand with the shepherds of God's flock in this country whose original name means "deep roots."

SYRIA IS CURRENTLY HOME TO PERHAPS THE WORST MAN-MADE HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN WORLD HISTORY. HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS HAVE LOST THEIR LIVES, WHILE MILLIONS HAVE BEEN PUSHED FROM THEIR HOMES.

## 4 | SYRIA

Syria is currently home to perhaps the worst man-made humanitarian crisis in world history. Hundreds of thousands have lost their lives, while millions have been pushed from their homes. The church of Jesus Christ has also suffered great loss and persecution during this horrific six-year conflict. To come alongside and encourage the body of Christ in Syria we recently supported a gathering that was hosted by one of our ministry partners for church leaders and pastors. This time was set aside to equip these kingdom warriors through worship, prayer, fellowship and an extended time together in God's Word.

One of our friends in Syria reports: "The retreat came at the perfect time for all 120 workers who arrived from the front lines. It's hard to fathom how physically, emotionally, and spiritually exhausted these precious servants of the Lord were. There is no place to go in Syria to escape that war. There are just places that are less intense... It was the first time that leaders from a Christian background, Sunni Muslim background, Druze background, and Alawite background gathered together."



READ COLOSSIANS 4:7-8





## EPICENTER CONFERENCE 2017

### Would you like to learn more about how the Gospel is advancing in the Epicenter?

Please join Joel C. Rosenberg and his special guests on Friday evening, October 6 and Saturday, October 7, 2017 at Calvary Chapel Costa Mesa in Santa Ana, CA for Epicenter® Conference 2017 entitled What Does the Future Hold for Israel and Her Neighbors? Learn firsthand from Jewish, Arab and Palestinian pastors and ministry leaders as they share the story, in real time, of how the Gospel is advancing and is uniquely being shared in Israel and in the neighboring nations.

**To learn more, check out upcoming conferences on [epicenterconference.com](http://epicenterconference.com)**



## ISRAEL TOUR & PRAYER SUMMIT 2018

### Have you Walked Where Jesus Walked?

Join Joel C. Rosenberg and The Joshua Fund for a Prayer and Vision Tour of Israel from July 3-15, 2018 and the Epicenter® Prayer Summit, which will be held July 11-12, 2018. You will learn firsthand how current Middle East events relate to the fulfillment of biblical prophecy and see the Bible come to life as you visit ancient sites where Jesus taught and ministered, including the Garden Tomb, Garden of Gethsemane, the Sea of Galilee and many more. Joel will teach the Scriptures and be available to answer your questions about the future of the Epicenter. You will have the opportunity to participate in a day of service to the needy as well as spend an unforgettable time in prayer for the people of Israel at the Prayer Summit. Keynote speakers at the Summit include Joel C. Rosenberg, Anne Graham Lotz and Dr. Ronnie Floyd. Please prayerfully consider joining us in 2018 in the Land of Israel.

**To learn more, visit [joshuafund.com/go/israel-tours](http://joshuafund.com/go/israel-tours)**



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**Partner with us in the work the Lord is doing through The Joshua Fund to bless the people in the Epicenter. Donate today online - it's easy, safe and secure.**

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 The Joshua Fund.

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



Join the conversations.

