



STORIES FROM THE FIELD

Prayer led by Dr. Ronnie Floyd at the Epicenter Prayer Summit

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

LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY

A WORD FROM JOEL C. ROSENBERG

The people who walk in darkness will see a great light; those who live in a dark land, the light will shine on them. - Isaiah 9:2

Since the inception of The Joshua Fund, Lynn and I have invited you to step into the story of how God was moving in the Epicenter. In this edition of *Stories from the Field*, our team will walk you through some of the ways God is working despite exceedingly difficult circumstances.

Tragically, we live in an age of wars and rumors of wars, Jihad and genocide, rampant poverty, bitter injustice and wrenching, heart-breaking suffering and grief. And yet, even as darkness descends, there is good news – we are seeing the words of the prophet Isaiah come to pass: *The people who walk in darkness will see a great light; those who live in a dark land, the light will shine on them. Isaiah 9:2*

Today, the Light of the Messiah is shining more brightly than ever in the Middle East. The Holy Spirit is on the move, evidenced by more Israelis coming to faith in Yeshua than at any time in 19 centuries.

More Muslims are leaving Islam and coming to faith in Christ than at any time in 14 centuries.

There is a growing boldness in the Church to proclaim the Gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit friend-to-friend, neighbor-to-neighbor using every high-tech tool at her disposal, from radio to satellite TV to the power of the Internet. Perhaps most

PG. 3 ►

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HARD-PRESSED
ON EVERY SIDE



4 2018 TOUR:
SHARING
GOD'S LOVE
IN ISRAEL

6 THE GOSPEL
CONTINUES TO
ADVANCE

HARD- PRESSED ON EVERY SIDE

We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed. - 2 Corinthians 4:8-9

These words, penned by the Apostle Paul thousands of years ago, capture the current state of believers living in the Muslim majority nations of the Middle East. For some, they are pressed on every side by trouble as their home is in the middle of an active war zone. Bullets fly overhead when their children walk home from school; bombs are detonated as they shop for dinner at the local market.

Others are hunted down, removed from their families and questioned about their Christian activities. Some are knocked down and imprisoned. Or even worse, others are killed for daring to share Christ with an unbelieving friend. If anyone understands being pressed, perplexed, hunted down and getting knocked down, it is the body of Christ in the Middle East. In their own words, they give us a glimpse into their lives and the troubles that press them on every side.

LEBANON

"We were forced in 2017 to learn how to deal with the persecution. The Lord sent our way brothers who taught us in a professional way how to, through the Bible, find ways to stand in the face of opposition... We came to a conclusion that it is a dead end for us if we try to go on without praying, worshiping and fasting!"

"What has been so encouraging for us this year is seeing the flock of mighty young men being equipped to be the faithful army of the last days."

IRAQ

*"I would like to share with you what happened last days in the big bombing of ** city. Our driver of church was with the car of the church which it used to transport from church to homes and attending to the church service. At that moment the explosion happened, and the car damaged badly but thanks God our driver is safe."*

EGYPT

"I was very encouraged by the many testimonies of people who came to know the Lord, because they saw Jesus and He touched them. To see Muslim Background believers worship the Lord is like the book of Acts being unfolded in front of our eyes. It is so encouraging to see the love of Christ in the lives of each one and how they want to serve Jesus and see many other Muslims to come to know His saving knowledge. I can tell you that Egypt is thirsty for the Word of God."

"Ministering to the Nubians is like planting palm trees. Those take years to grow sweet dates. It is like planting in a desert, and for roots to reach a water source takes much time."

JORDAN

"Living among Arabs has taught us to open our homes and cupboards to Muslim and Christian Arab friends, as well as foreign Gospel workers and visitors. Our passion is to openly share the reason for the hope that is within us. In every visit we ask if we can pray for them, ask if they would like to read the Bible, or follow up from previous conversations and questions. Hospitality is a core Middle Eastern value."

MIDDLE EAST

"If you go to work with refugees...Don't treat them as a project but as a human who needs your love."

"The harvest is in full swing... Despite, wars, famines, refugee displacement on a massive scale, terrorism, and the largest humanitarian crisis since WWII, Jesus is setting people free in the Muslim World, now more than ever. I would advise ministries to not pull back but to double their efforts and sound the alarm to God's great harvest in the Middle East. These are the days we have prayed for and waited for!"



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- MINISTRY PARTNER IN SYRIA

Thanks to your partnership, The Joshua Fund is reaching out to the pressed, perplexed, knocked down and hunted body of Christ in the Middle East, to let them know that they have not been abandoned by God, or by their fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. Would you remember them in your prayers today?

GIVE

Thanks to your faithful prayer and generous gifts, The Joshua Fund has been blessed to take part in bringing the Word of God to revive the hearts of afflicted people in the Epicenter.

LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY

CONTINUED



encouraging is that we see an unprecedented openness among millions upon millions of Jews, Muslims and nominal Christians from Tel Aviv to Tehran – from Ramallah to Riyadh – to at least listen to the Gospel and to at least consider the claims of Christ, even among those who are not yet ready to repent and receive Him by faith.

What accounts for such openness – even such responsiveness – amongst peoples so historically resistant to the Gospel? There are several dynamics at work, but above all, we are seeing the power of prayer. More Christians around the world are praying faithfully for the salvation of Israel and her neighbors than ever before – and God is answering those prayers.

And yet, to complete the task, much more is needed. Looking at the Scriptures in Luke 11:1, we see the plea of the disciples “*Lord, teach us to pray.*” Should this not be our plea, as well? Over the course of three years, Jesus taught His disciples many things. Yet, the only thing the disciples ever asked the Messiah to teach them was how to pray because they saw Him praying morning, noon and night.

They saw His intimate fellowship with His Father. And they saw the tremendous power of humble prayers answered by an all-mighty God. The sick were healed. The blind could see. The deaf could hear. The lame could walk. The dead were raised to new life.

No wonder the disciples wanted to learn how to pray like Jesus prayed. As you read the following pages, the testimonies and stories of how God is working despite opposition, can I encourage you to be praying for the fulfillment of Isaiah 9:2?

PRAY

Will you continue to pray for the people in the Epicenter, that many will see how wide and deep and vast is His love for them? Lord, would you open their eyes to the beautiful reality that Jesus is the Messiah we all so desperately need? Lord, teach us to pray.

200+

ISRAEL TOUR
PARTICIPANTS
SHARED GODS LOVE
SERVING THE NEEDY
DURING OUTREACH DAY



TIM LUGBILL
Executive Director



📍 | ISRAEL

TOUR PARTICIPANTS SHARE GOD'S LOVE IN ISRAEL

It never gets old. Watching people's excitement as they visit Israel is one of the favorite parts of my job. There's really nothing quite like observing people's reactions as they behold Jerusalem's Old City from the Mount of Olives, sail across the Sea of Galilee, sing praise songs at Capernaum, study Scripture in the Golan Heights, or take communion at the Garden Tomb. The Joshua Fund was honored to host more than 200 people from 33 states and 4 nations as part of our Prayer & Vision Tour in July, the majority of whom were first-time visitors.

If viewing the sites wasn't rich enough, tour participants also attended the Epicenter Prayer Summit, where our founder and chairman, Joel C. Rosenberg, was joined by Anne Graham Lotz, Pastor Ronnie Floyd and local believers from Jewish, Arab and Palestinian backgrounds. Together, the speakers taught us how to intercede for our brothers and sisters in the Land.

For many tour participants, however, their most unforgettable experience may have occurred on the tour's Outreach Day. There, they joined volunteers at six of The Joshua Fund's Distribution Centers to share God's love with needy people from various backgrounds. The household gifts (pots and pans, towels, tea kettles, etc.), were purchased through Joshua Fund donations and distributed by tour participants, who were working alongside local congregations and ministries.

"My life changed today," one woman on the tour told me. Having spent the day with Holocaust survivors, she was overcome with emotion. Those receiving the goods were also moved, as they wiped tears and hugged those who were distributing the goods. Recipients were told that Christians from America had paid for these goods and had come to share God's love with them. The town's mayor welcomed our group and commended our efforts to honor citizens of his community. This work is only beginning. Our ministry partner will be reaching out to the survivors in future weeks with plans to continue developing relationships in this community.

Additional outreaches in the North and the South of Israel worked closely with local congregations that have been ministering to the poor for several years. Similarly, three outreaches near Jerusalem focused on needy people of all ages and backgrounds, including new moms, as well as Jewish, Russian and Arab families.

On behalf of the nearly 1,000 families who received these special gifts in July, thank you for your generosity and your partnership. On behalf of The Joshua Fund team here and in Israel, thank you for helping our local partners and our tour participants share God's love in real and practical ways this summer.

May God bless you richly as you continue to serve Him!



READ MATTHEW 25:40

GOSPEL ADVANCING DESPITE CHALLENGES

JEREMY GRAFMAN

Director of Special Projects

Israel...the Middle East...the Epicenter...these names immediately conjure thoughts, images and expectations in the minds of Christians around the globe. Because it's a unique region that plays such a vital part in both the history and future of Biblical truth, Israel fascinates so many followers of Jesus. In order for us Westerners to pray and serve our brothers and sisters in the region effectively, we need to remain aware of their unique challenges. Joyfully, despite many challenges, the Gospel continues to advance – as God's Holy Spirit is accomplishing His will through His people.

The entire region plays such an important role Biblically (both now and in the future), and this adds a degree of visibility and attention that can certainly impact the ministry work among locals. As those of you who have visited the region are aware, there is a huge, continual volume of Christians from all over the planet regularly coming through Israel. Many Christians hope to experience the Land and culture, see the historic Biblical sites and connect with local believers and ministries. This right-hearted interest can create a pressure of sorts for local ministries to serve as tourist and information centers for the throngs of well-meaning international believers. The desire among many visitors to meet, experience and help local ministries is certainly understandable. Still, each international group coming through the Land can generate a significant workload for local ministries, nearly all of which are in deep financial need. It remains important that in our desire to learn we do not place an unintended burden on local ministries and take them away from their primary calling of evangelism and discipleship.

Additionally, a host of factors serve to complicate the daily lives of local believers. A six-day workweek and the extremely high cost of living bring practical stresses on families, as most households feel compelled to have both husband and wife working. The distance people live from their congregation can also place barriers to ministry



and can hamper mid-week gatherings for believers. Both Messianic Jewish believers and Arab believers coming from a Muslim background can often experience a very high personal cost for following Jesus. This is often most deeply felt in their relationships with family and friends. For some, outright persecution and violence can be a very real threat, while others face more subtle yet constant daily assaults on their faith from worldly cultures and the cares of this life. Overall, the environment in Israel and the West Bank creates challenges for those committed to being active, committed disciples of Christ.

Since a multitude of traditional religious backgrounds saturate local culture, Evangelicals often face additional challenges to active Gospel outreach. The superficially “spiritual” atmosphere of the Holy Land can often dull the spiritual senses among locals, enabling a hardness of heart, as many people consider themselves spiritually “taken care of.” This challenge is compounded by the fact that Orthodox Judaism, Islam, and sometimes even the historic, traditional Christian faiths, will typically offer direct, vehement opposition to any outreach or Gospel proclamation coming from the local evangelical churches in their community. Maintaining the status quo of one’s religious affiliation takes priority and often relegates a discussion of true faith to more of a cultural issue than a truly spiritual matter. In addition to these challenges to effective ministry and evangelism, many are surprised by how little the average person on the street actually even knows about the God they may claim to serve. This reminds us all that there remain wide-open opportunities for sharing the Gospel throughout the region.

As is always the case, despite any challenges, the Gospel continues to spread throughout Israel and her Neighbors. Just as in the early days of the Church, persecution and trouble are not uncommon among believers here, but man’s plans to resist and stifle God’s Word will never prevail.

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PRAY

We are encouraged to see what seem to be new opportunities for sharing and a new openness among Jewish and Arab people alike to hearing the Good News. Here are some ways that you can specifically pray:

- For local believers that, despite any issues, they would continue to experience God’s joy and peace as they continue forward faithfully ministering;
- That the Holy Spirit would open hardened hearts among those whose religious lives have until now left them numb to their need of the Gospel;
- That ministries in the Land would be led by the Holy Spirit, and never by their sense of financial need; and
- That believers from other countries would continue to visit and to learn how we can best bless, encourage and equip ministries in Israel and her Neighbors, without distracting them from their primary calling and work.



READ ISAIAH 55:11

LEARN

LEARN & PRAY

2018 Epicenter Prayer Summit

Two foundational aspects of The Joshua Fund are Learn and Pray. And Learn and Pray are exactly what happened at the 2018 Epicenter Prayer Summit in Jerusalem.

We learned through the teaching of God's Word by Joel C. Rosenberg, Anne Graham Lotz, and Ronnie Floyd as well as through the personal testimonies of local Jewish, Israeli Arab, and Palestinian Arab pastors and ministry leaders.



Panel Discussion with Arab and Jewish Ministry Partners

With our hearts and minds full from the teaching and testimony, we then set out to pray and intercede for our brothers and sisters in the Epicenter.

The learning and praying were not only for those in attendance in Jerusalem. We are making the conference available to you online at epicenterconference.com.

To view all the messages from the 2018 Epicenter Prayer Summit visit epicenterconference.com



ANYWHERE. ANYTIME.

Epicenter Conference App

Download the free Epicenter App now and watch or listen to the 2018 Epicenter Prayer Summit. Join us in building a global movement to bless Israel and her neighbors.



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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.

