

THE JOSHUA FUND®

# report

## Preserving Life in Israel

It began in the 1980s when an Israeli pastor along with other local believers began a battle against “the shedding of innocent blood” throughout the land of Israel.

Anchored on a foundation of regular prayer meetings, the group had opportunities to speak in congregations throughout the land. These dear TJF ministry partners distributed flyers on street corners – teaching and reminding that abortion is a sin against God and against the Israeli people.

This vital ministry has made a significant impact on Israeli society. Today they are assisting 450 mothers and babies and have saved at least 1,500 Israeli lives. Just recently this ministry received an award from the Israeli Knesset for “their significant contribution to the protection of mothers and children.”

In Israel, the decision to have an abortion is often borne out of severe financial need. Our ministry partner often asks women if they would be willing to keep their babies if they

knew that the baby stroller, crib, diapers and other critical needs would be provided during the baby’s first year of life - and almost all of these women say that they would! What a simple gesture to enable life!

“We offer sensitive and caring assistance in a loving atmosphere. And we help all mothers, and all babies. Sudanese, Arab and Jewish mothers all come to us. While the largest pro-life organization in Israel will not assist non-Jewish mothers and children, including many Russian immigrants, we help them all.”

- A Joshua Fund Ministry Partner



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# SCATTERED

## IN THE CENTER

**BUT WHEN HE SAW THE MULTITUDES, HE WAS MOVED WITH COMPASSION FOR THEM, BECAUSE THEY WERE WEARY AND SCATTERED, LIKE SHEEP HAVING NO SHEPHERD. MATTHEW 9:36**

The entire Middle East and the Epicenter is weary from war. In Syria the loss of life has been astronomical, while today inside Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon the scattered are living out their lives as refugees in the worst modern-day humanitarian crisis on the planet.

Directly after Jesus was moved with compassion, He said to His disciples to pray to the Lord of the harvest that He would send out workers into His plentiful harvest. The view Jesus expressed was that these tired and displaced people had no one to protect and care for them, and yet many were ready to be gathered into His fold. Among these crowds of people were a great harvest of souls needing workers to tend and bring them into the Kingdom of God.

Today, The Joshua Fund continues to labor in the fields of harvest found throughout the Middle East. We see through the eyes of Jesus the millions of people who are fatigued and have been exiled from their homes. A region gripped in the bondage of religion and rivalry of blood lines that has cost the countless lives of the innocent and helpless.

### SHEPHERDLESS FLOCKS

Jesus saw the broken multitudes as if they were like sheep without a shepherd. His heart was stirred because people without anyone to care and cover them will end up weary and scattered. The Joshua Fund has been called to some very special and specific ministries in the Middle East as we seek to directly come alongside the contemporary shepherds of His people and workers in His fields.

Through being sent out, our Joshua Fund teams go into the fields of the Middle East and help identify those who are caring and ministering to the hurting and lost. The harvest Jesus spoke about is truly ready and ripe to be brought into the Kingdom. In fact, the harvest fields are as ripe in the Middle East as we have ever seen them. The pastors and leaders who work these fields can, however, themselves grow completely exhausted and pressed from every side.

One of the distinct areas of ministry for The Joshua Fund has been in the care of these shepherds. As an example, we have been able to give the pastors in the Middle East a time of refreshment, retreat and rest from the front-lines of the war both physically and spiritually. These somewhat silent and secret gatherings of church leaders have brought much fruit over the last several years. We have seen these leaders return to the fields of harvest with a fresh sense of the labor before them. In a recent gathering of Middle Eastern pastors, one of them encouraged us after our time together with the following:

“  
THROUGH BEING SENT  
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MIDDLE EAST AND  
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”



*“We have so many groups and missionaries coming recently to our region because of the current push of persecution by the religious radicals. The church in the West has responded by sending out people to assist us in the middle of our suffering. The lives of so many are being ministered to because of the church in the USA and other places that have responded. They send in money for humanitarian aid and supplies to help the refugees and other good works.*”

*“However, I want to tell you that the pastors here notice something different about your team – you care for us and for our families personally. You are looking beyond the projects and relief outreaches – you care for us as people and have a heart to support us in our ministries. Thank you and to all who pray and give money to your work.”*

The ministry of The Joshua Fund described through the heart of pastor in the Middle East.

The body of Christ in the Middle East will soon look very different. Given the seemingly endless war, suffering and massive humanitarian needs in the region, it is not surprising that hundreds of thousands of Christians, including some church leaders, have left in recent years. Though many in the church have left, the Lord is bringing in a new crop of workers, including new Believers from a religious background who are boldly sharing their faith and discipling others in the face of tremendous opposition and persecution.

Thank you once again for your continued support and prayers as we labor together in the Lord’s harvest. The harvest is plentiful and ripe, the laborers in the field are few and the Lord has called us all to minister to His people. On behalf of the many pastors throughout the weary, worn and scattered fields of the Middle East they say to you “...you care for us as people and have a heart to support us in our ministries - thank you!”



# HEROES & FRIENDS

## INVESTING IN THE NEXT GENERATION

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**BY JEREMY GRAFMAN**

*Director of Special Projects*

For the last eight years, I've had the unique privilege of walking alongside, getting to know, encouraging, praying for and absolutely falling in love with some of THE most important people in Israel - those laboring to disciple the younger believers. I've grown such a deep respect for those who are pouring out their lives as they pour in the Word of God to the next generation of Jewish and Arab followers of Jesus. These are solid, down-to-earth brothers and sisters who aren't afraid to roll up their sleeves and do whatever is needed, spiritually and practically. I've watched them willingly sleep in the dirt with these kids at camps and retreats, staying up half the night with them - simply to earn the right to know them personally. They make every effort to draw near to them so they might eventually minister to them in the deep, personal ways they need.

Youth ministry in Israel is fascinating in that, unlike in the United States, it's quite national. While youth groups regularly meet in local fellowships and churches, there are many opportunities for young believers from a wide range of different congregations to come together for fellowship, valuable time in the Word and worship. Due to the relatively small size of the Body of Christ in Israel, those who openly follow Jesus seem to have a better understanding than their counterparts in the States of the need to be continually connected to each other. I have often been deeply touched to witness the powerful impact that just seeing other believers gathered together can have on

these youth, who are coming from small congregations scattered throughout the Land. There is a visible, even palpable, sense of joy and encouragement I've witnessed each and every time these young followers of Jesus can gather.

Also, due to the wide variety of backgrounds these young disciples are coming from, the national youth ministry efforts often enable kids to cross boundaries between ministries, denominations or doctrines that are very different in flavor, yet all glorifying the Lord by their worship. This has provided many younger believers with a far better developed sense of their own freedom to fellowship among those from other 'streams' than many of their parents may have.

Due to the growth of the believing population in Israel over the last 25 years (now estimated at around 15,000), these youth ministries are needing to expand in order to keep up. Many gatherings we've had the privilege to be a part of have been packed with young followers of Jesus - each in a different stage in their walk with the Lord - yet all sharing one major need - more teaching, equipping and encouragement as they grow into the likeness of Christ Jesus.

Another tremendous blessing is witnessing some older members of this next generation who - having earlier been disciplined personally and touched by these same youth leaders and ministries - are now rising up to serve the younger members of their generation. It's so encouraging to see them now walking in the very fruitful ways of ministry that they had

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“ THERE IS A VISIBLE, EVEN PALPABLE, SENSE OF JOY AND ENCOURAGEMENT I’VE WITNESSED EACH AND EVERY TIME THESE YOUNG FOLLOWERS OF JESUS CAN GATHER. ”



"O GOD, YOU HAVE TAUGHT ME FROM MY YOUTH, AND I STILL DECLARE YOUR WONDROUS DEEDS. AND EVEN WHEN I AM OLD AND GRAY, O GOD, DO NOT FORSAKE ME, UNTIL I DECLARE YOUR STRENGTH TO THIS GENERATION, YOUR POWER TO ALL WHO ARE TO COME." PSALM 71:17-18



PRAY

been disciplined in – and it's a powerful testimony to the need for this type of ongoing investment into their lives. These equipping and teaching efforts are especially critical based on what each of these young people – Jewish and Arab alike – face on a day to day basis.

One other highly unique and effective approach is that of longer term, 'live in' ministry. One key effort, in particular, provides full-time support and encouragement for 12 young believers, over a 3-month period. Each participant has either just completed their required military service, or are at the same approximate age. This is typically such a crucial season in the formation and strengthening of their faith, as the years of military service can be particularly difficult for young believers. It's hard to even quantify just how impactful and life giving this tremendously demanding work has been. The dedication of those who labor in this way is truly humbling. The work receives the full support of the congregations throughout the Land – with almost 30 different local pastors and teachers participating during the 90 days of discipleship to help equip, encourage, pour into and prepare these treasured young ones.

These youth ministries have long been on our heart. The Joshua Fund has been working to encourage and undergird the efforts of these wonderful local leaders – and you have already had an extremely significant role in enabling and supporting these key ministry efforts. But I also want you to stay aware that this vital discipleship and teaching work in Israel is still in its own youth, as well, and as such, is truly in need of our continued prayer and attention. **Will you please join us in ensuring the Lord hears their specific needs?**

## PLEASE PRAY WITH US

**Pray that the Lord, as He leads, would provide for the youth ministries that are growing and bursting at the seams.**

- Pray that the Lord would bring full time staff.
- Pray for many "servant staff" volunteers from among the local congregations.
- Pray that each ministry would be able to secure and maintain a location to host these vital ministry efforts.
- Pray that some would experience 'breakthrough' type provision, perhaps even to allowing them to acquire permanent locations for their work.

**Pray that none of these young disciples would fall through the cracks.**

- Pray that their local congregations would 'see' them and continue meeting their deepest needs to know Jesus on a week-to-week basis.
- Pray that the national youth ministries who support many local congregations would continue to bear much lasting fruit as they seek to equip and sustain the next generation, to help them grow in their faith and to ensure that they stay rooted and grounded in the truth and vibrant in their faith.
- Pray with us that the laborers in these crucial roles would not grow weary in their well doing.

Social workers and welfare agencies around the country now often refer pregnant mothers to one of their 12 offices. "We offer sensitive and caring assistance in a loving atmosphere," says our partner. "And we help all mothers, and all babies. Sudanese, Arab and Jewish mothers all come to us. While the largest pro-life organization in Israel will not assist non-Jewish mothers and children, including many Russian immigrants, we help them all."

The Joshua Fund is honored to partner with this ministry by providing them with diapers and other items to help these mothers and babies. Please join us in continued, fervent prayer for this life-saving work of the Lord!



## Serving the Invisible in Israel

The Joshua Fund sponsors more than a dozen distribution centers (DCs) that provide food on a monthly basis to more than 3,000 families. All of our DCs are directly connected to congregations or like-minded ministries. This gives local believers an opportunity to minister personally to the needy in their area and to be a blessing in their communities. Recipients are often told that the food they are receiving is a gift from believers from North America who love Israel and her people.

Not so long ago, I had the privilege of meeting with those who manage these DCs. What a blessing to spend time with people who are literally the hands and feet of The Joshua Fund's humanitarian work in Israel. I thought you'd appreciate hearing from those who are closest to the ministry action.

"We serve the invisible," explained one volunteer, noting that most of the recipients of food packs go unnoticed. "What a privilege it is to partner with The Joshua Fund, to go into people's homes and sit down with them, touch them and give them a hug. That really touches their heart." Spending time with them and sharing their burdens encourages both the giver and the receiver.

At another DC, members of a congregation "adopt" 1-2 needy families. They visit these families monthly, distributing food packs, developing relationships and sharing God's love. Both recipients and distributors now look forward to their monthly get togethers.

At yet another DC, the youth group gathers each month to take the bulk food The Joshua Fund has delivered to them and create family food packs. This has "impacted our young people's lives, affected their walk with the Lord and their love for the Lord," said the DC manager. The DC has been distributing to poor families regardless of ethnic or religious background, for many months, and its work has been recognized by community leaders. The food packs have "given us a platform to speak to the village," she said.

Single moms, Holocaust survivors, immigrants young and old (most who can't speak Hebrew), recovering drug addicts, unemployed, disabled, mentally challenged – these are among those who receive food packs provided monthly by The Joshua Fund. Your prayers and financial gifts are directly responsible for ministering to the invisible.

**Thank you for honoring us with your trust, gifts and prayer. We are incredibly grateful for your partnership.**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tim Luginbill". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**TIM LUGIBILL**  
Executive Director

# What's happening in the Middle East?



Take a moment to review the video, audio and newsletter resources available on our Educational Resources page at [JoshuaFund.com](http://JoshuaFund.com). Whether you want to review a past newsletter article, watch the latest video message from our Founder and Chairman, Joel C. Rosenberg or listen to an update from a ministry partner in the Epicenter, these resources are there for you. **Be sure to watch a recently posted series from Joel entitled "Update on the Crisis in the Middle East." Scan the QR code to access the Educational Resources Section of the website.**



## DO YOU HAVE A HEART TO SHARE ABOUT THE WORK THE LORD IS DOING THROUGH THE JOSHUA FUND TO BLESS ISRAEL AND HER NEIGHBORS IN THE NAME OF JESUS?

Call or text (703) 260-6344 or email [christine@joshuaFund.net](mailto:christine@joshuaFund.net) to request your free copy of The Joshua Fund Packet and discover ways you can partner with us.



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Website [joshuaFund.com](http://joshuaFund.com)

**Partner with us in the work the Lord is doing through The Joshua Fund to bless 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.





August 2016\*

## Dear friend of The Joshua Fund -

*"For what thanks can we render to God for you in return for all the joy with which we rejoice before our God on your account....?" (I Thessalonians 3:9)*

Shalom and greetings from Israel.

As we celebrate The Joshua Fund's 10th anniversary, I wanted to write a more personal note for two reasons - to thank you for your incredibly faithful prayers and financial support, and to update you on some of the truly wonderful and encouraging things we see God doing here in Israel, as well as in Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon, Syria and Iraq.

### Tremendous Openness Among Israelis To The Gospel

People are constantly asking me, "What's the most interesting thing you've learned since moving to the Epicenter?" There are two things, actually: **We are seeing an unprecedented openness to the Gospel amongst Israeli Jews, and an unprecedented openness to the Gospel amongst Arab and Persian Muslims.**

To be clear: it's not that large numbers of Jews in Israel are coming to faith in Yeshua as Messiah yet (though more and more are), but Israelis are increasingly curious to talk about Yeshua, learn about Him, discuss Him and get to know His followers.

Unbelieving Israelis are always asking me why in the world our family moved here when so many of them want to move to the United States. When I say that we love Israel and want to be with our people, they say, "Yeah, yeah, so come and visit. But why actually move here when you were already living in the true Promised Land?" When I say that the Bible prophecy indicates that all Jews will eventually move back to Israel (see Ezekiel 39:28), they find that curious but not compelling. But when I explain that we are followers of Yeshua and that He told us it was time to come, rather than sparking an angry reaction, more often than not a fascinating spiritual conversation is about to begin.

What's more, I can't tell you how many times I've heard from Israeli believing friends saying they know someone who has read one of my books and would like to get together with me to talk not about my books but about my faith. They ask me why I believe Yeshua is the Messiah, how many other Jews in Israel believe this (and are shocked to hear more than 15,000), what my parents think of my faith, and so forth. Again, these typically aren't hostile debates or confrontations. Rather, they are open, honest, genuine inquiries from sincere and friendly people and I can't adequately explain what a joy that is.

That said, our family's experiences aren't unique. As we've reported in past newsletters, large numbers of Israeli Jews are watching videos online that explain the Gospel in Hebrew, watching testimonies by fellow Israeli Jews on how they became followers of Yeshua, and watching apologetic videos answering commonly asked questions and objections to the Gospel.

Recently, I learned about a 2015 Pew Forum survey of Israeli religious attitudes, which found that 18% of all Israeli Jews say that a Jewish person can believe that Yeshua is the Messiah and still be Jewish - and this includes 19% of very religious Orthodox Jews, who say you're not rejecting your Jewish identity if you follow Yeshua. Amazing!

True, these numbers are lower than in the U.S. **Still, we are witnessing a sea change in public opinion given that "Messianic Judaism" was utterly "taboo" here for the past twenty centuries.**

Continued

## Tremendous Openness Among Muslims To The Gospel

In the Muslims world, we are seeing even more openness. **In fact, millions of Muslims are not merely curious about the Gospel but are actively turning away from Islam to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.**

I commend to your attention "Believers In Christ From A Muslim Background: A Global Census," a 19-page peer-reviewed article written by two respected Christian scholars, Dr. Duane Alexander Miller and Patrick Johnstone. Their study examined all the research that has been done on Muslim conversions to Christianity from 1960 to 2010. They carefully analyzed the data and tried to take special care to weed out double-counting and other variables. Their conclusion was stunning: From 1960 to 2010, the number of Muslims that have converted to faith in Jesus Christ has grown from fewer than 200,000 to some 10 million.

Miller and Johnstone concluded the number of conversions over the past 50 years could be as low as around six million or as high as around 17 or 18 million. It's impossible, of course, to get absolutely precise numbers of conversions out of Iran or Saudi Arabia, among other closed countries. That said, the scholars conclude the figure of ten million conversions is a solid, conservative estimate.

To date, this is the most definitive data I have personally seen verifying the Great Awakening underway in the Muslim world. True, in a world of 1.6 billion Muslims, ten million conversions does not seem like many. But in nearly fourteen centuries of Islam, there were almost no conversions to Christianity.

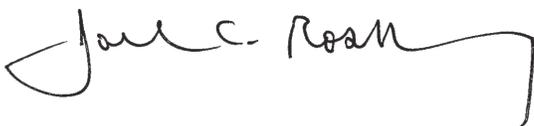
Now, however, a civil war is underway inside Islam. Muslims from Morocco to Indonesia are questioning what they believe, why they believe it, and whether they have the truth or not. Many are looking at the "purist" Islamic regimes (i.e., Iran and ISIS) and concluding, "If that's Islam, I can't be a part of it." They are searching satellite TV, radio and the Internet for answers. Some are reading the Bible and examining the claims of Christ.

**Many Muslims are seeing dreams and visions of Jesus – and they are coming to faith in numbers we've never seen.** To me, what's important is not the number, per se – it's the dynamic. The trend lines are moving in a positive direction for the first time since Islam was founded in the seventh century.

These are some of the reasons Lynn and I are so deeply grateful the Lord created The Joshua Fund ten years ago, and why we are so profoundly thankful for your prayers and financial support. Yes, darkness is falling in the region. We're seeing wars and rumors of war. We're seeing terrible persecution of the Church and even genocidal conditions. But we're also seeing the Lord open doors and hearts and minds.

Thank you so much for helping us come alongside Christ-followers in the Epicenter to love them, learn from them, encourage them, pray for them, and invest in the Kingdom-work God is doing through them. Now is the moment to be helping the Church in the Epicenter be a bright light in the darkness – what a blessing to be in this work together with you.

In Christ's love,



**JOEL C. ROSENBERG**

Co-founder and Chairman  
The Joshua Fund

\* Originally sent via email to The Joshua Fund partners in August 2016.