

ISRAEL Trip First Week RECAP, Part 2 - 4/7/2008:

Friday: Breakfast with my Jewish friends from LA, Medical Doctor and his wife. We get daily reports from each other. We seem to see the world politics from the same viewpoint, thankfully. They have a son living in Jerusalem.

Calls, files, notes and routine of keeping organized. Nice day for run, lots of sun! This is the Sabbath so no University Students on walkways. The entire city begins to shut down starting around 2:00pm. From busy traffic to very quiet.

Good day to travel to Ein Karem, the birth place of John the Baptist and also the site of the "visitation" of Mary, now expecting, to Elizabeth, also expecting. Amazing event of two young mothers about to give birth to the last Prophet? and the Messiah who would make the most impact on the world of any person in history, past or future. Getting to Ein Karem is no easy matter. The further you get from Jerusalem center the less you see in English signs. Nonetheless, after a few minor miss turns and turn around's, I arrive. I met a Brother Anthony, part of the order looking after the church of John the Baptist. Interesting conversation and very nice person. He gave me a lot of local background. Then 15 minute walk up long climb and many steps to the Church of Visitation. Both are beautiful churches. Conversated with a tour guide here and learned he was a grad of the Bethlehem Bible College. He knew all of the people I work with there and had a very high opinion of them. Site of Mary's well is located at the bottom of the valley between the two churches.

Back to hotel to change and go to Bethlehem for dinner with Bishara and Salwa Awad and Sami Awad and family. Sami heads the Holy Land Foundation, a very large group who works training non violence, to both Jew and Arab. There is a US based filming group doing a documentary on Sami and his work. He said they spent a week following him everywhere, even filming daily routines. Sounds like a major production.

Toured the Hope School while in Bethlehem. This is the boarding school where Bishara started Bethlehem Bible College. Very clean and well maintained. Lots of recent additions of new classrooms and equipment.

Days wrap up doing emails and follow up on Internet.

Saturday: Jerusalem Assembly service today. The Messianic Believers meet on Saturday to keep Jewish tradition and to assist orderly transition for new believers who are often challenged when accepting Jesus. I am always impressed with the scripture based message here. I think too often in the US there is a desire to "market" the message with "new" approaches. I much prefer the intense scripture message that expands your Bible knowledge. As always, very nice service.

Had a "Sabbath" meal with a family friend and widow of a leader in the Messianic movement in Israel. Haya is a real character, colorful clothes and friendly to everyone she meets. The Sabbath meal was at the hotel and attended mostly by Jews. This is a long and multi course meal with much more food than any human needs. Haya seemed to have a great Sabbath and she was home by 4:30pm. I like Haya, but quiet solitude is also very nice. I actually think Haya did all of the talking.

Evening of work on the Internet and correspondence.

Sunday: East Jerusalem Baptist Church, also known as Methodist if necessary, since they serve both groups and many others. A group from Alabama, Pastors and Mission workers serving at BBC, attended as well as a group from England. Also, a guest pastor from a local church. Service at 10:30, lots of Pastors giving talks, then we had communion service at 12:00noon, [followed] by the "Message". The final Pastor commented it was shaping up to be a Baptist Revival Session! 1:00pm and the social began that follows the service. 2:00pm and then on to Beit Sahour which is the Shepherds field town adjoining Bethlehem. BBC is having a special luncheon for the Alabama volunteers and I get to go along, like it or not! Seems like the endless day. Nonetheless, a great outing. Lots of very informing conversations and some possible connections to people and groups to assist in mission work. Evening and heading back to Jerusalem to unplug and have a quiet dinner.

Monday: Morning routines of running the hills around the University and then eating the always large Israeli breakfast. I am beginning the packing and sorting for the trip home has begun. Time to get rid of anything not really needed.

Afternoon meeting with Aviel Schneider, Editor-in-Chief [and manager] of the widely circulated Israel Today magazine. It is sometimes called NAI, or news about Israel. He is a very bright and successful; and now has two floors in a building in the center of Jerusalem, near the Ben Yahuda area. My last visit was at the old office in the German Quarter. We had a very long visit. Since he covers all areas of the country and the Messianic movement, he is a great source of information. He is very focused and direct. He has a very strong Zionist view and is a dedicated follower of Jesus. He publishes Israel Today in five languages with US and Europe the major distribution areas. Opportunity to have some good Turkish [strong] coffee.

Late afternoon visit to Musalaha to deliver some materials to Salim who will give them to the Beit Asaph Pastor, Even, when they meet tomorrow. Beats the uncertain mail system.

Evening return to hotel, beginning the process of packing & preparing for trip home.

Blessings to all, Roger, CWP