

Upcoming Tours with JCF:

From the United Kingdom with Ian and Carolyn Jupp:

Israel - History, Fulfillment and Destiny.

Touring dates: June 18 - 28, 2004. Land costs only - \$1169.

For further details see our website:

www.jerusalemcornerstone.org

or contact Carolyn at Israel@cthree.org

Up to Zion

with Jack & Judy Stone and Jim & Betsy Gerrish October 25

thru November 5. Estimated cost: \$2499

from Dallas/Fort Worth, Texas, USA.

Jesus, the Rabbits, the Torah and the Gospels

- A Thanksgiving Tour, with Derek Fullerton, November 16-25, 2004.

Prices from Colorado Springs, CO., USA to be posted soon.

Please feel free to inquire about other tours and courses

yonni@jerusalemcornerstone.org or write us at:

JCF P.O.Box 54351 Tulsa, OK. 74155. Tel. 918-622-9573



Shlomo has not been able to walk for months. His only lifeline is the telephone that he keeps on the floor by his bed. Hannah is still able to make the run to the store for groceries and their daily staples.

Shlomo and Hannah are estranged from the Jewish community because of their belief in Jesus. Having immigrated from the United States several decades ago, they are far from any relatives. Recently their plight came to the attention of a local believer, when Hannah ended up in the emergency room after a bad fall in the city center. A social worker was assigned to their case but could only go so far in getting the right doctors and psychiatrists involved without the help of a third party to ensure that the process doesn't drag on. Jerusalem Cornerstone has become that third party, and some of our staff have taken an active role to assist this elderly couple.

We will continue to provide visitation and basic assistance until the social workers locate the necessary health and housing care for Shlomo and Hannah. Hopefully we will be following this story up in the coming issues with a good report. In the meantime, we encourage our readers to pray for this couple and others like them that have fallen through the cracks of the system primarily because of their faith.

Events: Calendar updates for Jan/Feb

Gary Alley is on assignment traveling in Iraq with Jonathan Miles (Shevet Achim) searching for more babies in need of heart surgeries. Gary will also be looking for other opportunities to build ties between Israelis and Iraqis. He is scouting potential students for our biblical Hebrew ulpan courses and other educational opportunities with JCF here in Israel.



Francois Smit previously worked in South Africa as an electronic engineer and later marketing manager in the hi-tech industry. Heeding God's call, he and his wife Ronel moved to Jerusalem in 2002. He is currently working towards an M.A. in Biblical Studies at the Hebrew University. Ronel is a certified occupational therapist, and is studying modern Hebrew part-time. The couple is expecting their first child.

Francois and Ronel share a passion for people in need and had been involved in various ministries in their home country. They are very excited about their involvement with the Israel Emergency Aid Fund.

JCF:

In days of spiritual and national challenge, one goes through times of questioning and introspection. The story of Elijah the prophet and the widow of Zaraphath comes to mind in a more direct and powerful way than ever before.

1 Kings 17, relates a story of spiritual and physical famine, of national decay and backsliding. Understanding the severity of the spiritual bankruptcy of his nation the now unpopular Elijah steps into the scene. He has also heard the voice of the Lord with His call to repentance. The widow of Zaraphath embodies the trust and faith that God will supply every need even in the most dire of circumstances.

Elijah's seemingly audacious proposal to the widow to make him a cake of bread is first met with faith on the part of the foreigner from the region of Sidon (in modern day Lebanon).

There are several lessons to glean, one: God will meet our needs even if He uses, and most likely will, unique means of supply that need. Two: God is no respecter of persons. He continually goes outside the accepted boundaries we may have drawn in order to demonstrate His all-caring attitude toward his creation. Three: God employs less than perfect messengers and beneficiaries of His grace. Both Elijah and the widow were prone to recoil in fear and doubt God's initial word to them but overcame and submitted to the call on their lives.

I am encouraged by the word in verse 13 and 14: Don't be afraid...go ahead and cook...for the Lord God of Israel says that there will always be plenty...

- Charles Kopp, JCF Chairman

Slipping Through the Cracks

By Liz Kopp

We were warned, but nothing prepared us for the horrendous sight that met our eyes: two elderly people (in their 80's) living in unbelievable squalor in an orthodox neighborhood near the heart of Jerusalem.

Newspapers towels and plastic covered the broken windows of the two-room apartment. We could hear shuffling inside after knocking on the metal door. Shlomo and Hannah (names have been changed to protect their identities) married late in life and rely on each other for their basic needs. Shlomo is bedridden but can still hear. Hannah has very little of her hearing and eyesight left but can still walk. Shlomo spoke out loudly to let Hannah know someone was at the door. We heard Hannah shuffling to the door to let us in. That is where any semblance of normalcy ends. There was no room for us to enter. Hannah had to step outside so that we could step - one at a time - into the tiny space. Shlomo's bed lines one wall and Hannah's lines the other. A small television gives the only light in the room revealing the clutter of boxes and broken down furniture. A tiny kitchenette near the door houses a half-sized refrigerator and washing machine. There is a hot plate for cooking and a small sink for washing up. The bathroom is an outhouse, but the landlord keeps it locked to punish them for losing the key a few years ago, forcing them to use bottles and relieve themselves outdoors. Still, for all this the landlord is charging \$500.00 per month.

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Is There a Special Blessing for the Trees?

Jon "Yoni" Gerrish

Tu B'Shevat (the 15th of the month, Shevat, which falls this year on Feb. 7) signals the beginning of spring in Israel. Winter rains are at the peak of their power and the land responds with brimming buds of fragrance and new life. It is considered a New Year for the Trees. To mark this moment, many trees are planted throughout the county.

For Jews outside of Israel, Tu B'Shevat is a celebration of the renewal of vision and awareness, a celebration of connections and connectedness--to the inner-self, to the social world of human beings, and to the natural world and its Maker.

During the 17th century when Ottoman Turks were beginning a systematic campaign to harvest the forests of this country, a group of Kabbalist Jews from the northern Galilee town of Safed began celebrating the New Year for the Trees with a festive meal that was modeled after the Passover seder meal. Probably influenced by the esoteric meaning of Deuteronomy 20:19: "For man is like the tree of the field" they developed a special liturgy focusing on the abundant gifts of the natural world, with applications for the spiritual man.

The Tu B'Shevat seder includes many blessings and drinking four cups of wine with varying percentages of red and white wine, representing perhaps the shifting of yearly seasons. This special seder also includes readings on trees and fruit from a range of Jewish literature.

The earliest-ripening fruit is from the "shekadiyah" the almond tree...site: Jer. 1:11-12:

Background to Tu B'Shevat

The word "Tu" pronounced "too" in the name "Tu B'Shevat." "Tu" is constructed from the Hebrew letters "tet" and "vav." "Tet" is the ninth letter in the Hebrew alphabet; "vav" is the sixth. Nine + Six = Fifteen. Tu B'Shevat is celebrated on the fifteenth of the month, Shevat.

Was there an ancient 'tree planting' celebration in Israel? We cannot find anything from the biblical period or from the Bible itself that specifically mentions Tu B'Shevat, but during the later rabbinical period literature there is a reference in the Mishnah (compiled at the end of 2nd century A.D.).

There are four new years, on the first of Nisan is a new year for kings and for festivals, on the first of Elul is the new year for the tithe of cattle...on the first of Tishri is the new year for years for release and jubilee years, for plantation and for tithes of vegetables, on the first of Shevat is the new year for trees (Beit Shammai), but according to the ruling of Beit Hillel it is placed on the fifteenth of that month (Mishnah, Rosh ha Shanah 2a).

For more information see: Encyclopedia Judaica, Tu B'Shevat, and on the Internet we found this site useful for general background to Jewish holidays: www.ou.org

Good News from the Middle East

(A non-oxymoron) by Liz Kopp

Daily killings televised from the Middle East would leave the impression that life is cheap in these parts. Too few and far between are the reports regarding the continuous efforts to save lives.

Jerusalem Post reporter, Judy Siegel writes: "Despite the ongoing conflict between Israel and its Arab neighbors, Israeli Arab children with end-stage kidney disease are as likely to receive precious cadaver kidneys as their Jewish counterparts. This was reported by a pediatric nephrologist at Jerusalem's Sha'are Zedek Hospital in the latest issue of Pediatrics.

Prof. Alfred Drukker and colleagues at the hospital found that, from 1990 to 2000, Arab Israeli children received 66 kidneys from cadavers and Jewish children received 64. The mean renal transplant score calculated by computers on the basis of disease severity and tissue compatibility to reflect urgency of transplantation was identical for Arab and Jewish children, they wrote.

The waiting times for a kidney and the long-term outcome of the surgery did not differ between Jewish and Arab children, they found.

In Israel, there are no registration fees: there is a system of universal health insurance in which transplant surgery is covered by health funds if organs are available; and computers set priorities on the basis of objective data."