

## WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY – PILGRIMAGE TO JERUSALEM 2018.



### Participants:

We were 12 plus leader, assembling in three stages:

1. Thurs 18 Jan: Leader Jo Simister, Dr Cyril and Mrs Felicity Young, Dr Lesley Dawson.
2. Fri 19 Jan: Alison Driscoll with Christine Handel, Chrissie and Mike Tinson.
3. Sat 20 Jan: Dr David Toorawa with Mariya Kothanikkal, Bennieve Lawrence Thompson, Matthew Taylor and Richard Baker.

Owing to an emergency at home, Lesley returned early. The remainder dispersed on Sun 28 Jan:

1. David, Mariya, Matthew to the UK;
2. Jo, Cyril and Felicity to Sebastiya, as per the advertised itinerary;
3. Alison, Christine, Chrissie, Mike, Bennieve and Richard to the Galilee, with Yusef Daher, (as most had not visited the country before).

### Finances:

Despite last minutes dropouts and the early return of one member of the group, we kept to the prices quoted for a group of 15 and managed to break even. (NB: The Michael Prior Fund provided a bursary for half the costs for Mariya Kothanikkal, and the costs associated with the Michael prior Seminar.)

### Accommodation:

- Gloria Hotel in Jerusalem (8-10 nights): very good accommodation, friendly and helpful, but it is busy and really caters for shorter stays of international groups. No chapel, repetitive menu to suit international groups, but comfortable lounge spaces.
- Sebastia guesthouse (1 night): absolutely unsuitable for our kind of group (extremely cold and lots of steep steps), would be good as a summer hostel sleeping 18 in dorms.
- Taybeh Golden Hotel (1 night): excellent; warm and accommodating.

### Travel, guiding, etc:

- Yusef Daher (tour agent) provided bus and driver for five days, and arranged the two-night tour of the Galilee.
- Bassam Turjman (interpreter) facilitated the main programme and the Sebastiya visit, and arranged most of the transfers.

### Itinerary:

- The visits were arranged around the 5pm services in the various churches in Jerusalem
- One day was disrupted by a general strike called by the PNA (rare and consequently widely observed) in protest at US Vice-President Pence's visit.

Thurs 18 Jan	Leader Jo Simister, and 'early birds' arrive – pick up by Bassam Turjman – late dinner at 8pm.
Fri 19 Jan	Early arrivals check arrangements for seminar, etc. ABCD group arrive; pick up by Bassam Turjman.
Sat 20 Jan	Early arrivals and ABCD group explore the Old City and walk down to St Anne's church to meet Yusef Daher; attend Greek Orthodox Vespers in the Calvary chapel in the Holy Sepulchre. The third group arrive, pick up by Bassam Turjman and one by Nesher; late dinner.
Sun 21 Jan	<u>Taybeh:</u> Liturgy of Christ's Baptism at the Gk Orthodox church; Soup and mezze lunch at Peter's Place in the Old Town; Taybeh Winery; ancient church sites; through the wilderness to the Jericho Baptism site; 'Comfort break' at the American Colony. 5pm Week of Prayer inaugural service at St George's Anglican Cathedral. Dinner; Speaker: Revd John Howard from the Methodist Liaison Office; Prayer.
Mon 22 Jan	<u>Bedouin: Arabs in Israel</u> British Cemetery in Beersheba; Laqiya carpet weaving projects, Cafe lunch in Laqiya; drive back along Dead Sea. 5pm with the Armenians. Dinner; Prayer time
Tues 23 Jan	<u>The Land:</u> control of land, borders.... The Wall... settlements, etc. STRIKE DAY: ALL PLANNED VISITS TO BETHLEHEM AND BEIT SAHOUR PROJECTS CANCELLED, AND HEBRON CENTRE INACCESSIBLE Via Mt Scopus British Cemetery to Bethany; via Wadi Nar to Beit Sahour (Shepherds' Fields) churches. Hebron: Russian Orthodox Church at Mamre; falafel sandwiches in Hebron; glass/ceramic workshop; Tent of Nations. 5pm at the Lutheran Church of the Redeemer. Dinner. Reflection and prayer time
Weds 24 Jan	<u>Nur Shams and Nablus: minority sects and denominations</u> Travel north through Israel towards Tulkarem, to Nur Shams refugee camp and clinic, and on to Nablus: Jacob's Well; 'pit stops' for local konafeh and cakes, and fresh falafel. 5pm at the Latin Patriarchate Church (i.e. Roman Catholic). Dinner. Reflection and prayer .
Thurs 25 Jan	<u>Free choice suggestions:</u> Sabeel , etc; 4pm in the Cenacle (Upper Room) on Mt Zion with the Benedictines from the Church of the Dormition. 6-8pm: Living Stones Scholars Seminar at the Church of the Redeemer in the Old City. Late dinner with two guests, following Felicity's Burn's Night address to a knobbly fruit (a Kobaad).
Fri 26 Jan	<u>Free choice suggestions:</u> Melkite early morning liturgy, devotional walk ( Mt of Olives and Via Dolorosa). 5pm: with the Syrian Orthodox Church of St Mark

Sat 27 Jan	<u>Bethlehem</u> The Wall graffiti etc; Bethlehem Lutheran Centre; Bethlehem Icon Centre Mass and tour; Nativity church; 'Comfort break' at Casa Nova in Manger Square. 5pm with the Ethiopian Orthodox. Dinner with our interpreter, agent, and other guests.
Sun 28 Jan	<u>Group disbands:</u> One person by Neshar for an earlier flight; 3 to Abu Ghosh, Neve Shalom, Latrun and Canada Park, 2 to the airport; 6 to local services then Galilee. 5pm closing service with the Melkite (Greek Catholic) Church of the Annunciation. 3 to Sebastiya.
Mon 29 Jan	<u>Sebastiya</u> Explore the archaeological site at Sebastiya, visit the Ten Lepers Church at Birkin; one night at Taybah Golden Walls hotel.
Tues 30 Jan	<u>Airport</u> Depart to the airport for noon (via??).

**Churches and holy sites visited (in addition to prayer schedule):**

Jerusalem / Old City: Via Dolorosa chapels e.g. Simon of Cyrene  
St John the Baptist – reopened and under renovation  
Melkite Church of the Annunciation – Friday morning liturgy  
Via Dolorosa & Garden Tomb devotional walk  
Mount of Olives: devotional walk down, visiting various churches on the way  
Taybeh: Gk Orthodox church: Liturgy of Christ's Baptism  
Ruins of the original church  
Jericho: Baptism site on the Feast of Christ's Baptism  
Bethany: church and Lazarus' tomb  
Beit Sahour: church  
Bethlehem: Church of the Nativity  
Mamre (Hebron): Russian Orthodox Church  
Nablus: Jacob's Well Greek Orthodox church  
Abu Ghosh: Crusader church for Sunday High Mass  
Birkin: Church of the Ten Lepers

**Places (other than holy sites):**

East Jerusalem / Old City: Melia Centre; Arab Orthodox Museum; Austrian Hospice;  
American Colony [NB slow service!]; Mt Scopus: British cemetery  
Taybeh Old Town: Peter's Place lunch [NB expensive!] and museum; Winery  
Beersheba: British Cemetery  
Laqiya: carpet weaving projects and local cafe for shawarma and salad lunch  
Hebron [strike day]: Tent of Nations, glass works, local cafe for chicken sandwiches  
Nablus: drive around Rafidia, stops for traditional konafeh and cakes, and fresh falafel  
Bethlehem: Walled-off Hotel, graffiti art on the Wall, Lutheran Church centre for coffee,  
local crafts wholesalers, Casa Nova in Manger Square  
Latrun and Canada Park  
Neve Shalom/ Walat as-Salam – picnic and coffee

Sebastiya archaeological site

**People and projects:**

Yusef Daher at St Anne's

Wassef Daher – and thanks for speedy facilitation of Lesley's travel home

Abed Younan at the Latin Patriarchate

Notre Dame

Carrie Balanger Smith at the Redeemer Church

Revd John Howard, Methodist Liaison Office, based in Tiberias and Tantur

Nur Shams refugee camp, clinic [ABCD project]

Sabeel

Betty Majaj (former director of Amira Basma Centre on the Mt of Olives)

Pamela (volunteer PA to the Anglican bishop)

Ian Knowles and students at Bethlehem Icon Centre

Nora Kort

Four Homes of Mercy, and the Four Homes of Mercy office, director Dr Salem Jarayseh

Educational Bookshop and Sharbain's bookshop

Sisters of St Joseph in Jerusalem to deliver a donation for the Sisters in Bethlehem

Sisters of St Joseph in Bethlehem and the Holy Family Children's home (Creche)

Revd Geoffrey Marshall, Derby Diocese, who was supervising the McCabe groups, and

Emily Dodd (his god-daughter), children's author. (NB Geoffrey compiled the Pilgrimage Resource book for McCabe's).

Revd Lauren at St Andrew's.

Helen Shehadeh, one-time Principal at Helen Keller School

Mary Musallam, sister of Daoud Nassar at Tent of Nations.

Lutheran Bishop Emeritus, Munir Younan.

**Living Stones Scholars' Seminar at the Church of the Redeemer in the Old City:**

Lesley had masterminded arrangements with the scholars, but had to return to the UK before the night, so David chaired.

Publicity was handed out at previous services and leaflets left at several venues.

The seminar went very well, considering the heavy rain and freezing conditions (snow expected), and we are very grateful to the Lutheran Church for their hospitality.

12 of us attended, plus 2 scholars, 2 stand-ins and 8 audience, who asked sensible questions and made good comments.

- Issa Younan talked briefly about his brother's study and work (Abed's daughter was sick);
- Emil Haloun spoke eloquently and at length about his situation and study - definitely a star for a MP lecture sometime, fascinating;
- Grace Zoughbi who was accompanied by her parents (Pastor Issa and Diana Al-Zoughbi) and husband (Revd Michael Arteen), spoke passionately about her thesis and its importance – a politician in the making we think!
- and the father-in-law of Rawan Muniyeh (Dr Salim Munayer) said a little about her study.

There were other scholars who had planned to attend but could not get through checkpoints from the West Bank.

**Return:**

Two members were pulled aside for questioning (Mariya Kothanikkal, Richard Baker) and three people had bags searched without them being present (David Toorawa, Chrissy Tinson and Felicity Young). As some damage occurred to the bags, a complaint is being made.

**Comments:**

Christine: Thank you also to all for such a week, I cant think of an adjective because none seem to fit. Lots and lots of memories to process and think about. It was good to see such places with people who shared beliefs and were on the same wave length. Somewhere I think none of us will ever, or would want to, forget.

Emil Haloun: I cannot put into words to thank all of you for the wonderful evening in Jerusalem. I enjoyed every single minute of it and left very much enriched. I hope you will organise similar events in the future and you are more than welcome to use the facility of the guest house in Ibilin if you wish to visit Galilee.

***PROGRAMME***

Saturday, Jan. 20	Anastasis (Holy Sepulchre), Calvary <i>Greek Orthodox Office of "Apodeipnon"(Compline)</i>	5.30 p.m.
Sunday, Jan. 21	Anglican Cathedral of St George Nablus Road	5.00 p.m.
Monday, Jan. 22	Armenian Cathedral of St James Old City, Armenian Quarter	5.00 p.m.
Tuesday, Jan. 23	Lutheran Church of the Redeemer Old City, near the Holy Sepulchre	5.00 p.m.
Wednesday, Jan. 24	Latin Patriarchate' s Church Old City, from Jaffa Gate	5.00 p.m.
Thursday, Jan. 25	Upper Room, Cenacle Mount Zion	4.00 p.m.
Friday, Jan. 26	St Mark's Church, Syrian Orthodox Old City, near Jaffa Gate	5.00 p.m.
Saturday, Jan. 27	Ethiopian Orthodox Church West Jerusalem, off Prophets' Street	5.00 p.m.
Sunday, Jan. 28	Greek Catholic Church of Annunciation Old City, near Jaffa Gate	5.00 p.m.

Jo Simister, 11 March 2018.