

The Springfield Redeemer



To Him was given dominion and glory and a Kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. Daniel 7:14a

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Returning from Israel by Roberta D'Amico

This is a brief story of what it was like in Israel the 10 days I was blessed to go there. It would be impossible to relate all we did and saw, but here are some highlights. We met at Newark Airport December 29, 2018, and right away the ten of us on our team became "Mishpachah" – family! Our leaders were Dr. Jeff Johnson and his wife Louise. For the duration of the trip we did everything together, except sleep!

We were reminded that it is illegal to witness about Jesus Christ to people in Israel. Upon arriving we saw that the land was startlingly different from New England. However, the Mediterranean Sea, which I touched, looked very much like the Atlantic, with big waves! There were green fields but they appeared to be all cultivated, and many orchards also. It was a Sunday, but very busy, because the day after Sabbath is their first day of the work week.

Our first stop was Caesarea, where God brought into His



Kingdom one of the first Gentile

believers, the Roman Centurion Cornelius! It was awesome to stand where the Apostle Paul stood and preached.

From there we went to Haifa, north of Tel Aviv, and visited a home for Holocaust Survivors. They are poor and lack resources, and like most people in Israel, struggling to survive. Dr. Jeff's organization, Israel Today Ministries, brought them and the Children's Home some funds. The place we visited in Haifa is home to 70 Holocaust survivors. One of the residents, Ms. Mania Hermann, told us her story. They do a lot of art therapy there, and Mania had drawn many pictures which were hanging on the wall, depicting her terrible experience in World War II at the hands of the Nazis. As she told her story of terror, abuse, and death,



she illustrated it with the pictures she had drawn. She was a young child then and miraculously survived. It is a story that we cannot forget. The idea that some groups of people are superior and others are inferior is evil and must not be allowed to determine who lives and who dies.

Following Christ looks different here in Israel. Christians here may be of many nationalities. Our excellent tour guide was Jewish, and he explained the history of Israel from his perspective. He spoke of how the Jewish people have been falsely condemned for centuries for "killing Jesus" and also hated for the business success that God has blessed them with. This persecution motivates many Jews to make the decision to move to Israel, where living is difficult, but where they finally "belong."

The second day, we were at Galilee, crossing the Sea in a boat



where Jesus stilled the storm and walked on the water. It was amazing! We visited the place where He fed the 5000, and we put our feet in the water at the place where Jesus cooked breakfast for His Disciples. Then, we visited the places where Jesus healed the man who had a legion of demons (named Kursi), Capernaum, Magdala, and finally down to the Jordan River where three of us got baptized (as a rededication), in the same river Jesus was baptized in!

That day or the next, we visited Pastor Afif, who pastors a church in Nazareth, winning souls and also working with Bedouins. Yes, there are still nomads living in tents in Israel! Later in the week we went to Bethlehem, which is in the Palestinian section and heavily guarded, and visited a church pastored by Arab Christians who have been severely persecuted. One thing I learned was that there are radicals in every people group, but God is saving souls and they are our brothers and sisters in Christ. They are not the enemy, Satan is. They are his victims.

One place out of all that meant the most to me was Shiloh. I learned that Shiloh was the first capital of Israel. The Tabernacle where the

Israelites met with God, through their priests, stood here for 369 years until the Philistines captured it. This is where Hannah came to God pleading for a baby. She broke the tradition of going to the priest, but God heard her cry and granted her a son. When he was weaned, Hannah brought him to the Priest Eli who raised him and he became the greatest prophet and judge of Israel. As I stood there, the scene became so vivid in my mind! It is so different to be there in person instead of seeing it in pictures!

The other favorite place was the Garden Tomb. It is near the place where they crucified the Lord, by the Place of the Skull, right in the middle of a crowded Palestinian neighborhood. It is a lovely, serene



garden, and the tomb is open to let you go in. Stepping over the channel where the stone was rolled away, was the place where they laid His body and from where He rose on the third day. We took communion in that garden.

I would urge you all to take a trip to Israel if you have a chance. It changes the way you see things, the way you feel about people, and the way you understand the Scriptures.

A Big Celebration to Glorify God! by Roberta D'Amico

Our Pastor C.S. Cooley turned 70 in January! To celebrate, over 100 people came to his birthday party at the Macedonia Church of God in Christ here in Springfield Massachusetts, even though the tickets were \$50. The reason for the high price is that the money, after expenses, will all go to the building fund for the new United Temple Church Sanctuary and Holy Grounds Coffee House II!

Dinner was delicious and ample, and entertainment was provided by the New Prodigal Sons in their excellent three-part harmony. It was beautiful. Among other dignitaries, Pastor Andrew Daniels was the keynote speaker.

The guests were from various places, especially family, United Temple Church, Holy Grounds Coffee House, and others who came to give testimony to this man who is one of the wisest, most godly of our Lord's servants. It is inspiring to see what he has accomplished in his 70 years through the leading and power of the Holy Spirit. Amen! And to think about all the people God has touched and influenced through him.

It is amazing to know what God has done with the life of our Pastor, C.S. Cooley!

Ongoing Events

SUNDAY SERVICES: 10 a.m.-Motivated by Faith with Pastors Bobby & Kim; 1 p.m. - Redemption Gate Church with Pastor Brian Greene;

MONDAY – FRIDAY: Morning Bible Study at 7:30 a.m.

WED – Trust Jesus Recovery at 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.

THURSDAY: Women's Bible Study 1:00 p.m.; FIAT 2nd and 4th Thursday 7 p.m.

SATURDAY: No Saturday lunch until further notice. 1ST SATURDAY: Feb 2, "Marriage with God" 4 to 6 p.m.

SATURDAY NIGHT: February 23, 7 PM. Open Mic and Fellowship! For more details, call Cathy Marvici at 413-233-7242.