

11-YEAR MIRACLE

It started for us in 2010 when Marty and I introduced the "Do Something" visits to Israel. Over the previous years we had been travelling to Israel with North Americans for the standard 10-day tourist visits, but often we would hear the same comment "I loved my trip, but next time I go to Israel, I really want to **do something**".

That made sense to us since Christians are motivated to make real and sustaining impact on those they meet; we agreed to fashion future trips in such a way that our presence would somehow bless someone. I had no idea it would turn into so much more...

WORK & TRAVEL

Our itinerary began, working alongside benevolent Israelis who work hard every day to feed many who could not feed themselves. A global repatriation (Ez 36) brought (and still does) many thousands of Jewish people from over 20 nations as the Spirit of God has been calling them home. But many who have returned, arrived with nothing, and really needed support until they could begin their lives again. So, our first stop was to work with caring Israelis in soup kitchens in Jerusalem and Ashkelon.

Our team's experience was further enriched during our visit to a charity that supported special needs children and adults. We arrived during preparing time when donated charitable gifts must be prepared for the fund-raising event that would sustain the centre's ongoing care needs. But our efforts were enhanced as we worked alongside some of Israel's elite military who had also chosen to donate their time that same day.

And so it went, as we criss-crossed Israel, working in fields, picking oranges for soup kitchens; sorting fruit in a distribution centre for the soup kitchens; visiting an orphanage in Bethlehem; painting an Ethiopian reception centre and squeezing in some education, which further enhanced our love for the Land of the Book!

PEOPLE OF THE BOOK

But our final stop on the "Do Something" visit was the exclamation point of the trip. Our American friend Cheryl had arranged for us to visit the Morningstar Fellowship Church in Tiberias which was under construction.

This second-floor church was an expansion. Its members had for a long time, rented premises in a nearby church for their services, but it was now time to grow and go. As with most church expansions, members work at the speed of the available funding, and this church was the same; volunteers were needed. During some earlier work done in the sanctuary, construction workers had caused considerable mess to the floor and before next stages could be complete, the arduous task of scraping floors (on our knees) was necessary.

Our team was comprised of Christians of all backgrounds, including pastor, counsellor, teacher, business owner, retirees and even me (not sure where I fit in this amazing group). But multiple lifetimes of accomplishments evaporated when all got on their knees to scrape floors in the House of the Lord! That was one of the highlights of the trip for me!

The next highlight came when Pastor Claude arrived to thank the team.



VOICE OF HOPE

In 1979, our ministry switched on the Voice of Hope radio station from its location in an active war zone of South Lebanon, broadcasting the Gospel for 20 years until eventually overrun by terrorists.

During those miraculous years, the vast majority of listeners were Arabic speaking people from all across the Middle East. Marty & I had the privilege of assembling the listening letters one day. We had been involved with the station for 20 years but had never seen any fruit from that labor. But now (2000), holding letters from 32 countries, we were overwhelmed.

To our great surprise, there was very little response from Israel, although the station had been positioned just 1 mile from its northern border. Perhaps the Voice of Hope was not impacting the target of our many efforts?

PASTOR CLAUDE

As Claude greeted our exhausted team, we learned of his own journey, which Marty and I had never heard before that day. Claude was a young French Jew who arrived to live and work at a Kibbutz in the Galilee in the 1980's. And then one day as he listened to his radio, he found our Voice of Hope station. Eventually, he followed the invitation given by our on-air presenter and gave his life to Yeshua.

For the next 3 years, Claude listened to our broadcasts, growing spiritually with each new message. There were no evangelical churches near him and the religious climate of the day would have made it uncomfortable for a young Jew to attend a Christian church. So, his mentor was our station.

But the day came when young Claude studied the Word in depth, leading him to share what he had discovered. Bible studies brought new friends and more Bible studies brought more new friends-mostly from the immigrant population. In time, these Bible studies grew into a small church but as a young fellowship, meagre offerings only produced enough to cover rent for a few hours a week in an old church in Tiberias.

LOCATION-LOCATION

And now, looking up from our knees, we were thrilled to see the nearby Sea of Galilee just a few hundred feet away from the Morningstar Church. In fact, during subsequent visits, we learned of a nearby archeological dig that uncovered an ancient village not far from the church and also on the sea shore. BUT in that village were the remains of a synagogue where it was felt our own Jesus would have attended and taught.

I felt like I should be back on my knees. Jesus' ministry began here on the seashore when He called His disciples and the church began when he commissioned those same disciples three years later at His ascension!

It all began here...

And now, by the grace of God, Marty and I met a man who had come to faith in Christ through the very first station we helped to build and operate. I have never had the words to describe what I felt (and still do). But privileged is one that comes to mind!

In that moment, I decided to stand with Claude if/when he would need us. As time went on, he has, and the Lord has enabled us to gently support the church as it develops. During subsequent visits to Morningstar (2011, 2013 and 2016) we have been blessed to provide tangible support for the church outreach. But another highlight happened this week...

FELLOWSHIP & OUTREACH

Pastor Claude now leads a wonderful congregation in weekly worship & teaching services; he quietly supports









- 1 SERVING IN ASHKELON SOUP KITCHEN (2010)
- 2 WORKING ALONGSIDE BENEVOLENT ISRAELI SOLDIERS
- **3 HAPPY ORANGE PICKING TEAM (2010)**
- 4 CLEANING FLOORS AT MORNINGSTAR FELLOWSHIP CHURCH

















- **5 HUMBLE SERVANT TEAM**
- 6 ANCIENT ARCHEOLOGICAL DISCOVERY AT THE EDGE OF GALILEE
- 7 PICKING SWEET POTATOES FOR SOUP KITCHEN (2011)
- 8 PLANTING TREES FOR NATIONAL RECOVERY (2013)
- 9 SORTING ARTIFACTS AT ARCHEOLOGICAL DIG IN JERUSALEM (2013)
- 10 MEETING ISRAELI SOLDIERS NEAR SITE OF VOICE OF HOPE (2011)
- 11 ANCIENT CAVE CHURCH IN BETHLEHEM (2011)
- 12 FATHER-SON PICKING ORANGES FOR ISRAELI SOUP KITCHEN (2013)

local humanitarian outreach and has recently started an internet TV outreach (which we also support) for Russian viewers called galil.tv found on YouTube. But his heart has always been to provide enhanced fellowship for his members outside service times; and to provide a safe place for members to minister to new visitors enquiring about Yeshua. That required an expansion of his facility, and that meant \$45,000 for facilities purchase and another \$25,000 for facilities renovation.

Our 2-year conversation came to critical point this week when I was forced to tell him our intentions were still the same-to stand with him; but recent challenges forced us to hesitate until the Lord provided. That is normal conversation between ministry leaders. But what came next was not normal!

SURPRISE GIFT

Within hours of that conversation, I took a phone call from Sarah at our US office, who prefaced her news with "I thought you would like to know"...I could hardly wait. A cheque that would cover the \$45,000 need had just arrived, sent from a good friend of the ministry who had participated in past but had never given in this way. His unexpected gift set off a chain of exciting emails that brought cheers from both sides of the ocean. And during my call to express our gratitude together with the need just met, I was struck by his humility and God's control. "I wanted to do this for a long time but could not until now". Simple-straightforward and perfectly timed. Sovereignty is sweet indeed!

And I marvelled once again at the patient, meticulous way the Lord performs His miraculous provision in our lives, to accomplish His plan. For 11 years He has been preparing His people for a unique ministry moment in the Galilee; but stepping back, I can see He has actually been preparing for this moment since 1979-a 41-year miracle – to accomplish at least part His plan in the Galilee.

I wonder how many other miracles we might actually be standing in but not yet aware. I love it when He gives us a peek at His plans!

O Lord, You are my God;

I will exalt You, I will give thanks to Your name; For You have worked wonders, plans formed long ago, with perfect faithfulness. Isaiah 25:1 NASB

WALKING IN KING DAVID'S STEPS EIN GEDI (2011)

Please pray about Pastor Claude's need for the \$25,000 renovation need.

Don

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