



THE OLIVE TREE MESSAGE!

NEWSLETTER

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We Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem! Psalm 122:6

December 2004

Two Week Trip to Israel

"Shalom y'all!" That is the bumper sticker we got at Vered Hagalil, with "Vered Hagalil" (Rose of Galilee) in Hebrew underneath. The owner is from Chicago, whom we met in 1968, our first trip to Israel, when our sons were 10, 8, and 6. Two years ago we renewed contact by giving him some photos from 1968 for his Museum. Yehuda made aliyah in 1949 and married locally. Their dude ranch is north of Kinneret (Sea of Galilee), with several cottages. We stayed 2 nights, visited other friends in the Galilee, and lighted Hanukkah candles #2 & 3 with them. Last year they had a VIP visit them from Texas, so they made those special bumper stickers.

Hanukkah candle #1 was with friends in Ramat Gan, #4 with newly Orthodox friends in Kiryat Bialik over our 2nd Shabbat weekend, #5 & 6 with a widow friend in Caesarea, and #7 in Beit Dagan with friends we met in Gainesville, FL. Beit Dagan is very near the airport, so we turned in our Avis car, Ilan picked us up, we had supper at their house and a visit, and then they gave us the large Hanukiah to take home and a ride to the airport! Our plane left at 5:30am, so we had a long night exploring the beautiful new terminal at Ben Gurion Airport.

Our friends in Kiryat Bialik are Israeli husband and Filipina wife, with a son and daughter, both born in Manila. We met Asher at the Embassy of Israel in Manila in 1983 when he was chief of security. Asher and Amb. Gordon came to Baguio City for vacation, but we persuaded them to come to speak to our congregation and some community friends. Asher never forgot us, but we had no contact until 2002. In the meantime, Asher left the Foreign Service, married Daisy and went into business in Manila. In 2002 I went to the Embassy of Israel to meet the new Ambassador and staff, as I do every time I arrive in the Philippines. After introductions, she asked me how I knew Asher, as he was asking about me! Security had informed Asher that I was coming. Amb. Irit put Asher on the phone, we got caught up, and had supper at their house the next day. As his children were getting older, he needed to bring his family to Israel to make conversion so they would be "kosher." Son Ben had his Bar Mitzvah last summer. They are strict Orthodox now. We enjoyed the Shabbat weekend and the synagogue services Friday and Saturday, and expect to see Asher again in Manila when we return there February this next year for the 3rd Annual APMF Bible Conference April 6-10 in Baguio City.

We met our friends in Ramat Gan a few years ago at the hotel in Banaue, Ifugao, Philippines. Meir was head of the Taipei branch of an Israeli computer application company. They were on vacation with their three sons. The next day we gave them a tour of the Banaue Rice Terraces and to meet some of our congregation members. On a bare plywood wall in one tiny house, they saw 12 pictures of Israel, from a calendar I had sent the widow the previous year. They were amazed how well Israel was known in this remote area of the world! They persuaded us to visit them in Taipei 2 years ago, and now in Israel where he is presently assigned.

Each family/person visited has an interesting story of our Israeli connections! We have about 30 addresses on our mailing list (we saw quite a few!) It is "kosher" to send Rosh HaShanah/New Year cards, but this year we were traveling in Canada, Alaska, and West Coast USA and did not have time to send cards. Therefore, Hanana finally got through on the phone to us when we got home in Oct, as she was worried about us and the 4 Florida hurricanes, and since for the first year in a long time, she and

Shmuel did not get a Rosh HaShanah card from us! And they asked, "When are you coming to Israel to visit us again?" We replied, maybe next year (until we checked prices and found a great deal...less than half the usual price.) Who cannot help but love such wonderful people, all of them, whether secular, Orthodox, Messianic, or whatever! Letters, emails, phone calls are great, but cannot take the place of a personal visit.

We arrived before Hanukkah, stayed with Messianic friends near Jerusalem and enjoyed our 1st Shabbat with them. We then stayed in Jerusalem a couple days, more visits, did some shopping, and of course we went to the Western Wall to pray for Israel (2 Chronicles 7:12-16, read it please!) There are also hundreds of Filipinos working in Israel, mostly ladies as Care Givers. Several are from our BIBAK congregations, so we also had good visits with those we could find, meeting some in Jerusalem and some in Tel Aviv. Sunday is their day off by contract. Most are there because of financial problems at home, so singles and wives go abroad to work as they can get jobs more easily than men. This is hard on families, but the economic situation of much of the world, including the Philippines, forces people to make hard decisions and personal sacrifices.

This, our shortest trip, completes 8 trips to Israel, totaling about 2 years, with the study year that included the Gulf War of 1991. When do we go again? When there is a need to go. We always have a suitcase ready. We would appreciate your prayers for Israel (Psalm 122:6), for the people and for all of our friends there, and for the government that is so ungodly, trying in the natural to maintain a place in this world that hates them, with lots of infighting and with a deeply divided population. Israel is unique, is here to stay as long as the sun shines (read Jeremiah 31) and is NOT replaced by the church. With anti-Semitism increasing all over the world, especially in Europe, Israelis need and value friendships. How many will result in coming to Faith in Yeshua The Messiah? That is up to the Holy Spirit. We do our part as guided by Him, with your help and prayers included...Thank you!

Since Islam has reared its ugly head again, as Satan's agent leading the fight against Israel, and spreading all over the world to influence, control, and dominate all the countries of the world, we know we are in a spiritual battle of the End Times. Now is no time to "enjoy this world" at the expense of neglecting God's program for this world and our individual parts to play. We know our part! Blessings on you as you know and play yours!

With our love and prayers,

Roger & Naomi Walkwitz

PS. If you have never been to Israel, you would be blessed by doing so. A vacation is an expense, but a **trip to Israel is an investment in your life** as you see the places where Bible action took place, experience a change in culture and schedules, and realize what a tiny country Israel really is! You can drive around the whole country in one day! Five Israels can fit in Florida. Is it safe? Yes! More safe than in any big city of the world.