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"For I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ"

Phillipians 1:19 (NKJ)

Dear friends,

Christ is Risen! المسيح قام (il-masih qaam).

Having returned on 24 March to the life of familiarity of beetles and buckets in the bathroom, I have also discovered many changes here in Jordan. Prices have gone through the roof and tensions with westerners and Christians have increased. More positively, Salt is now the cultural city this year and featured in a film *Captain Abu Raid*. The greatest shock for me, however, has been the weather as I left the UK in snow and hail and arrived to 30°C temperatures. Yet, as I walk down the street people call out my name as if I left yesterday! Through all of these changes, and the challenges that I faced in the months before returning, I am drawn to the verse above. Indeed, again and again I see how God – using your prayers – has brought me through many difficult situations and has actually used them to my advantage.

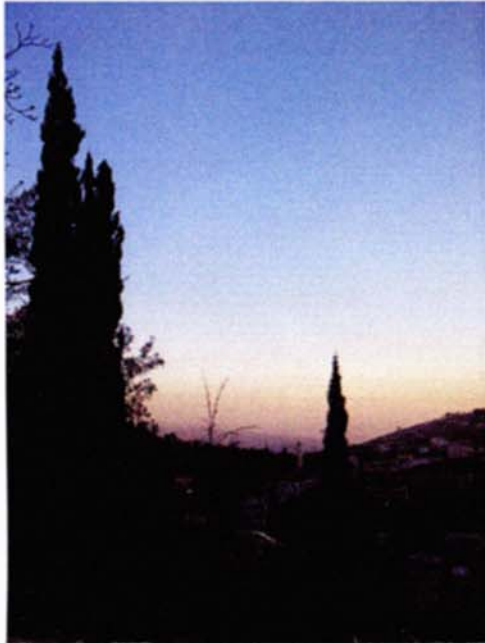
UK news

Indeed, my delayed return to Jordan turned out to be most advantageous. Although my medical tests turned out to be an unnecessary alarm, they kept me in the UK while my Nanna deteriorated in health before finally passing away on 4 March. We organised the funeral, and God blessed us with a lovely sunny day. It was a wonderful service, as she deserved. It also gave me good opportunity for rest, relaxation, reflection and spiritual refreshment. For this I was grateful for time spent with the leadership team of my church in Tooting, and for the fellowship of Christ Church, Woking. I also had the joy of sharing in their ministry in the tough Maybury estate, and amongst pub and club goers. This time has helped me to analyse my vision for this vocation.

'Easter' (Western rite)

It was with great joy and very enthusiastic singing that I celebrated the Feast of the Resurrection, with Christ Church, Woking, the day before I left England. A good reminder of what we are all about, and a perfect send off.

NB: The Eastern rite (& Jordanian) feast is on 27 April this year.



Jordanian work

Following my ill health last year, people want to make changes to my work. This may include working directly for the church. I am therefore currently having conversations and making enquires regarding the way forward and generally this is very positive. This is not too much of an inconvenience as I would have to renew old connections anyway and make new ones; nine months is a long time to be away and many people have left their work in that time. Of course I also have to recall my Arabic and Jordanian sign language too!

View from my house looking down
Wadi Shuwayb and the tomb of Gad

The church

Unfortunately there has been much discord in the English Speaking Church (ESAC) while I have been away. This was especially the case during the time of the interim minister, and I am quite glad I was not here and was not drawn to sides. The new Minister, Revd Lex McQueen and his wife June (CMS Australia), have a tough job reuniting the church. I was shocked at how few members we now have, about half the number from when I left. Also, the work among the Iraqi refugees was stopped but a group from within the church are trying to restart this. It is a tense time and we value your prayers.

Other news

Just before my return, Elizabeth Hume (a CMS mission partner) married Jamal, a local man who works at the Deaf School. She has now left CMS, although she will remain in Jordan.

Extra info!

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me. For more information on CMS, to become a member of CMS and receive their magazine Yes, please contact Anne Henriksen on anne.henriksen@cms-uk.org

Please be aware of the change in my telephone numbers

Fact file: Inflation

Many of you will have been feeling the effect of world economics and the increase in crude oil prices; well then, have a thought for Jordan. Jordan has no oil supply of its own, although exploration is ongoing and over 90 per cent of Jordan's oil supply arrives overland in tankers from Iraq and is refined locally. Historically, Jordan has subsidised oil and gas prices, making them affordable. For some time Jordan was subsidising oil at a price of \$40 a barrel, so when the price of crude rose above

\$100 a barrel the government felt the squeeze. As a result, they have stopped the subsidy causing an increase of over 50 per cent. This not only effects oil and gas as goods are transported by road and all prices have increased and people have turned to electricity to heat their homes. This has resulted in a power drain in populous areas. However, wages have remained the same – sending many who were in the middle classes into poverty, and others deeper.



Spring flowers around Salt (left) and flowers in Gilead (above)

PRAISE:

- Thank God for Good health over the last six months
- Praise God for my safe arrival in Jordan
- Praise God for giving his promised Son
- Thank God for my many relationships here
- Thank God for my family.

PRAYER:

- Please pray unity and growth at the ESAC congregation
- Please pray for the poor here in Jordan
- Please pray for the future of my work
- Please pray for safety here in Jordan
- Please pray for the church here, especially Bishop Suheil.

Goodbye (ma9 as salaama) مع السلام and God Bless الله يُباركُم (Allah yibaarikum).

If you require any more information please contact me, or CMS.

Yours in Christ

Michael