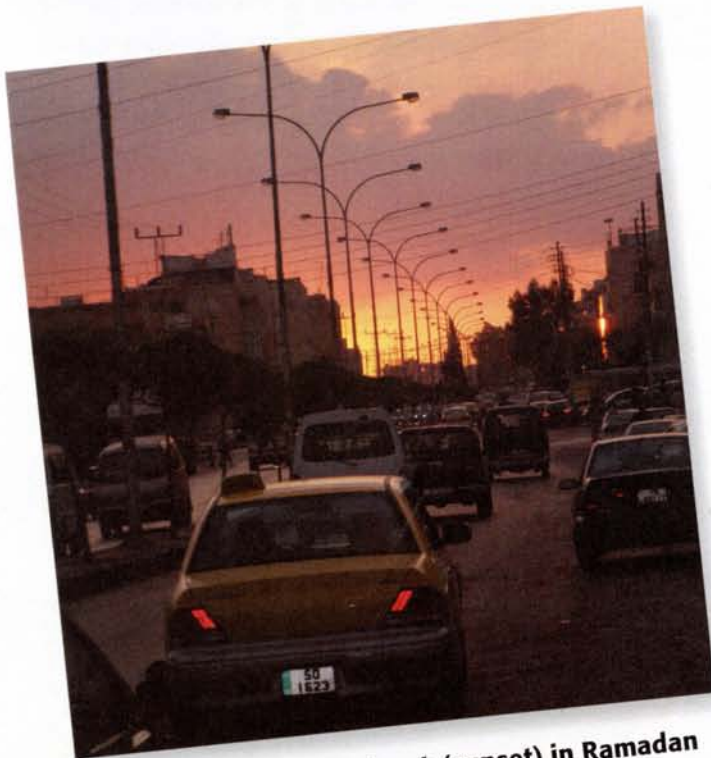


Link Letter No.24 September 2009

And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him [Jesus]. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour." Luke 4:17-19 (ESV)

Dear friends,

At this time during Ramadan, life here in Jordan is very different to normal. This is not only due to the fasting, but because shop opening times change and traffic is either jammed or the roads are empty. Many people switch to a nocturnal existence and during the early hours a drummer comes around waking people up. However, here in Jordan many things are not so obvious! The poor and the disabled certainly go unnoticed by many, especially as many disabled people are hidden away. *What about the captives?* Not



Hashimi during Mahgreb (sunset) in Ramadan



Michael Green
CMS mission partner
(Jordan)

prisoners, but the many servants who are held captive in their master's homes and not allowed out with all their documentation withheld? Some of these *are* seen, and perhaps treated well, but many never leave the house, often illegally smuggled into the country, with some being underage – caught by traders in their country of origin.

At the time that CMS celebrated 200 years of the abolition of the slave trade, I was pleased that we were still *'fighting the good fight'* but did not believe that the issue concerned me here. After all I was proclaiming the good news, working with the poor and the disabled. Then the Lord opened my eyes and challenged me to work with the captives and oppressed also!

Fasts and feasts

Just after my last Link Letter came out I returned briefly to the UK for my good friend Pete's wedding. It was a fantastic occasion and I enjoyed the mild weather and greenery. I also took the opportunity to catch up with family, old friends, and especially Paul Hill – who I met here in Jordan.

Last month I was also able to go to a confirmation in Salt, and catch up with friends. Currently we are in the middle of Ramadan (the Muslim fast), which is an interesting

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The Palestine Hospital Iftar

experience. By the time you read this we will have had *Eid il Fitr*, the feast that ends the fast. For the first time this year, I was invited to join a family breaking their day's fast. My Algerian friend Meziane invited me to join his parents for Algerian Couscous. Many companies organise a special *Iftar* (breakfast) for work and I very much enjoyed the Palestine Hospital *Iftar*.

As ever, my birthday was a good excuse to get together and bring different parts of my life together – it looked like the UN! Good food and good friends, a true Jordanian recipe. See photo below.

Community based rehabilitation

The CBR work has slackened off over the summer (as it does every year); however, I have been kept busy with other cases.

Jofeh

While there has been very little work in Jofeh over the summer, several extra visits have been made. Of particular concern is a sick deaf woman, Maha.

ai9diyya

Unfortunately, due to difficulties with the Centre, there have been no home visits during the summer. The problems with the staff need to be resolved as otherwise we will need to switch to a different centre.

House

Thanks be to God that my troubles have been sorted and I have been able to move back home. I have a new housemate, Sam, from the Isle of Wight, who is a great encouragement. I am soon to have another housemate also, from the US.

Fact file: immigrant workers

I have used here Filipino workers as an example, but much of what I write can be applied to other nationalities too.

Many Filipinos work in the Middle East (mostly Saudi Arabia and UAE) as engineers, nurses or hospital workers, accountants, office workers, construction workers, restaurant workers and maids. It is estimated that more than two million Filipinos have made the Middle East their home (see table, right).

Overseas Filipino workers (OFWs), both blue and white collar, can face significant obstacles, including illegal recruitment, mysterious deaths, discrimination and kidnapping.

OFWs have reported that their pay was withheld, and commonly have had their documents confiscated or hidden. Furthermore, some – mostly domestic helpers – are physically and sexually abused, even murdered. A well-known case is Sarah Balabagan. The Philippine government has responded by having local Philippine consulates and embassies assist with OFW needs, through the work of the Philippine Overseas Labour Offices (POLOs); this includes hostels with diplomatic status. NGOs, however, have had mixed results with some OFWs returning to the country.

Another issue is Filipino women becoming sex slaves. Thousands of women travel abroad for domestic work only to be tricked into sex work.

A major issue, and one that keeps overseas Filipinos from staying for good in the Philippines, is the lack of a

Birthday feast in Al-Fardous (Paradise)



comprehensive reintegration policy. Remittances have not been transformed into productive use so the economy still cannot provide better opportunities for those who are returning home. However, the Philippine government has devised a plan to provide livelihood and skills training programmes to OFWs, in order to help them reintegrate, ease the impact of their transition of working back home and increase their chances of gaining work again.

Filipinos living in the Middle East and Jordan:

AREA	PERMANENT	TEMPORARY	IRREGULAR	TOTAL
MIDDLE EAST	4,082	2,055,647	121,850	2,181,579
JORDAN	108	14,356	8,000	22,464

Church life

While the locums – the Ven. Don and Lurline Campbell – had a wonderful ministry here they have now returned home and Revd Lex McQueen has started again. The expat community thins in the summer but we hope to return to normal soon with a few new faces also. I am now also involved in the leadership of a Men's Breakfast, in co-operation with the Amman International Church. In November I hope to attend the Synod, as part of a discussion on my role here. Having returned home, I am once again also getting involved with the Church in Marka.

Providing refuge

Along with Rabe9a my friend, I have been helping

Rabe9a interviewing a Filipino runaway



Rabe9a and me discussing new cases

immigrant workers. One example is with a Sri Lankan lady called Maria who has ongoing health problems. I have also helped with a number of runaway cases, predominantly Filipino. One of these, after being sexually harassed, had taken refuge with a local man who had duped her into thinking that he would marry her. She got pregnant but he tried to kill the babies. We have provided medical care for her and her twins, got her into a safe house, and she is preparing to go to Manila where we are trying to provide support for her; we also gave her some food and a Filipino Bible. A number of other girls are now also being processed.

Despite a small home, Rabe9a takes Deuteronomy 23:15-16 literally! The Philippine Embassy has been a great help, especially Letah – the welfare officer. They also asked me to visit a psychiatric case and I nearly did a medical escort to Manila. We have been given permission to visit the hostel and supply medical care and Christian literature. There is also a complicated case of a legally unmarried couple for whom we are trying to establish the status of their son. Thanks also to Garrett (at the US Embassy), and Father Kevin, SJ. (a Roman Catholic Chaplain). We now hope to develop contacts with the Indonesian and Bangladeshi Embassies.

Friends

I feel especially challenged to develop new friendships with locals, possibly even that my new prayer partner should be local.

Other news

- Unfortunately I have not seen the Egyptian family again.
- The Qassar family I have met with socially but have not been able to help them.
- Circumstances have also prevented me from meeting with the

girl with Cerebral Palsy but please pray that we can meet after Eid.

- I have met some disabled children locally too.
- In November I hope to travel to provide epilepsy consultation; please pray especially for this.
- However much of this summer has been taken up caring for Hussein Fauwmy, a 44 year old Palestinian Jordanian. He was misdiagnosed and discharged from hospital with a swollen right eye and cranial nerve palsies and a normal MRI scan. With little money and nowhere to go, I got him admitted to the Palestine Hospital (I was able to use the hospital poor fund) and enlisted the help of Dr Hani Abdul-Aziz, a neurosurgeon, and an efficient multidisciplinary team.

A new MRI showed a lesion and Dr Hani performed a craniotomy (the first of 3 + 3 sinus operations so far). Hussein was diagnosed with a fungal infection (Mucormycosis), and is having anti-fungal treatment. So far, excluding the doctor's fees, it has cost 20,000JD. However, hopefully at the end of this month he will be transferred to the Army Hospital reducing costs. Given the 80 per cent mortality rate for such an infection he is doing well but it is still a long journey. *See photo, below.*

Listen on!

Go and listen to Tanas Al Qassis, my main contact in the CMS offices within Oxford. He is a Palestinian Arab Christian, and will be speaking on November 22 at St Mary's, Ferndown and on December 12-13 in Ipswich.

So I hope that we will all proclaim the Liberty of Our Lord as we go, and extend a hand so that those we meet can feel liberty and love as we pass; whether that be lifting up those disabled, or the poor, or the outcast or the captive.

Prayer and praise points

Praise

- Praise God for my work, and His hand guiding and guarding it.
- Thank God for a good and encouraging housemate.
- Thank God for solving my house problems.
- Praise God for the co-operation of many in high places.
- Thank God that He picks His own from whom he chooses.

Prayer

- Pray for safety in my travels and successful meetings, especially in November.
- Ask God to direct me to those in need – body, mind and spirit.
- Please pray for Mr Sabri, my CBR Team, and our work.
- Please pray for wisdom in the use of my time (work, rest and pray).
- Pray for wisdom in developing relationships.

Want more?

Have you considered visiting me, or volunteering? If you have any questions feel free to contact me. For more information or to become a member of CMS and receive their magazine *Yes*, contact CMS on action@cms-uk.org

For a colourful version of my letter join my e-link by contacting: jamespat@btinternet.com or by contacting CMS on: jonathan.self@cms-uk.org

So then let us proclaim this truth: Christ is Risen! (*il-masih qaam*). Good Bye (*ma9 as salaama*) and God Bless (*Allah yibaarikum*).

Yours in Christ,

Michael



Hussein and family - see text above

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