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There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. John 1:6-9 (ESV).

Dear friends,

as salaam 9alaykum (Peace be upon you), *kull 9am intu bi khayr* (every year and you're in goodness).

Recently I've had much experience of *witnessing*. I witnessed the Archbishop of Canterbury laying the foundation stone for the church at the Baptism site; I had to write a witness statement for the police when we rescued a girl; I was called as a witness in a civil case; I have witnessed armed police at schools that acted as Iraqi voting stations; finally, at home we

are studying the witness of the good news according to Mark. However, despite this, there is something different: each day I hope that I am a witness to the power of Jesus Christ, breaking the bonds of oppression and sickness in our lives. I recently helped in a study on the word liturgy, meaning worship. It became clear that this is not something that exists just in the church but also in our daily lives.

Church life

- At the English congregation (ESAC) I continue to be busy, including helping out with children's club. We will be celebrating the Resurrection on the Eastern date: 4 April at Mount Nebo with a 6am service. I enjoyed hosting a study group.

- I am currently being trained in order to lead the "Christianity Explained" course: a simple six-week course for those with no knowledge of the subject, based on Mark's Gospel. It is planned that I will lead the next course, which will be advertised at the Mt Nebo Service.

- At the Arabic church in Marka, Amman, I have not been as regular as I'd like but I am really beginning to feel at one with them.



Teaching the *Christianity Explored* course...

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The contrast between a slum in Jordan and a favourite picnic site

- The Men's Ministry is small but is progressing well. The last few months we have looked at the fears that hold us back from doing God's will, and praying for each other.
- I have also now joined a monthly group of young and committed evangelical locals to pray for Jordan, and the ministry needs here.
- In April I will be going on "Spiritual Direction" retreat in Wadi Rumm, and attending the CMS regional conference – both opportunities to refresh and get direction.

Hope and Trust

"Hope and Trust" is the new name of "IRAG" (Iraqi Refugee Advisory Group), a ministry started by Revd White while minister of ESAC, and supported by the Hope fund in the UK. The group is no longer exclusive to Iraqis, as many have left. I was involved from the beginning as a health consultant, but now with fewer men around I am getting involved in other aspects. This means taking down the stories of Iraqi refugees, helping to fill in application forms, and liaising with embassies and refugee agencies (ie: UNHCR). Over the past few months I have been helping Ali – a blind Iraqi – and his mum, to fill in their forms, and to help him cope with his health needs. This relationship is developing into a friendship.

Living Liberty (Al-Fida')

While the work is expanding rapidly, it can be heartbreaking. Sara* travelled to the Philippines on the last day of the year, and gave birth to twins two days later in Manila. But despite our offers of contacts, she did not seek help and we heard later that she had sold one of her babies to a male sex worker and plans to return to Jordan on a false passport. (*name changed)

Diro, the Filipino arrested with her Egyptian boyfriend for immoral activities and who was awaiting either obligatory marriage or prison, was bailed by her embassy. The Egyptian was deported, and Diro is now at the Philippine Overseas Labour Office (POLO) hostel awaiting repatriation; the case has been dropped.

The most dramatic case in this time was that of Nana, an Indonesian. She ran away even though she was advised not to, and then sought refuge with a local family who took her money for their rent. She then worked as a live-in housemaid, but was locked up and a week later phoned in great distress saying that her employer had tried to have sex with her; when she refused, he sexually assaulted her violently. But as a runaway, she did not want the police involved. However, I went with the police to release her from the house. After some care she was bailed to the Indonesian Embassy, but from which she has since run away. However the court case proceeds without her presence.

However, praise God that some cases are more positive; the couple trying to get their papers have been blessed. "Hope and Trust" offered to pay her visa 'overstay' to get her passport back

My housemate Sam writing up Ali's interview





CMS Regional Manager, Tanas Al Qassis



The Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams

from her employer and the department of residence gave her a week to get married as a condition of bail. But as permission is needed from the ministry of the Interior (and many documents needed), an extension was obtained. Her passport was due to expire and this was renewed, despite her having been trafficked on a false passport. They have been interviewed by a Muslim Sheikh to see if they are eligible for marriage, and hopefully by the time you read this they will be married. They had problems with their landlord (the case where I was called as a witness), but have now found a cheap house and an American has offered some furniture. The next step will be to arrange papers for their son. Thanks go to the Jordanian police, Mr Atef Majali (NCHR), and the POLO staff. However, we still urgently require contacts at the Indonesian Embassy.

Community rehabilitation

I am still not scheduled for work on the programme: still, I continue to make my own way to Jofeh each week. At the beginning of the year, Sai9diyya questioned my ability to work due to my language; as a result I was given a working exam, seeing three cases, and passed but some useful recommendations were made in order to improve communication. I still need a specific local health volunteer for each centre.

Jofeh

I was honoured by a visit from Dr Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury, and his team and it was a pleasure to meet Canon Joanna Udal (a former CMS mission partner) again. He was received as a sheikh by the local chiefs, and then saw our work in action – a deaf girl made an olive wood gift for him, while he watched her make it. *See the photo below left.*



The medical needs continue and we are thankful for the gift of 12 bottles of anti-fungal shampoo from Dr Sanna Haddad for use with the learning disabled classes. We also need to arrange an operation to remove a foreign body from a young girl's ear.

Fact file: *Al-Fida'* or "Redemption".

Al-Fida' means "the Redemption". In the Bible, God passed a law that anyone who was sold into slavery could be bought back. During 2008, CMS celebrated the abolition of the UK slave trade in 1808, and looked at forms of slavery today; we noted that all people are enslaved to something, whether an employer or an addiction, even sin. Initially, I thought that human trafficking was not an issue here but God quickly showed me that I was wrong. In our ministry we hope to bring back people from slavery; I do not mean releasing people from employment, but releasing all parties from the things that are oppressing them. Both sides need redemption and forgiveness.

Friends

My new prayer partner is Omar and he is a great encouragement. But I regret that I have not made enough time recently for my friends. Emran and I still meet up, and I also meet up with Sam and Diwa, two Aussies at ESAC, and my housemate Sam, with whom I try to pray each week. But mostly I saw Rabe9a and family, while they were living with me. One special memory will be watching the Jesus film in Magindanaon with Yasmine.

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us" Hebrews 12:1 (ESV).

So then let us witness to this truth: Christ is Risen! (il-masih qaam).

Praise and prayer points

- Praise God for the opportunities in my work.
- Praise God for His provisions for the family without documents.
- Thank God for faithful and enthusiastic Jordanians.

- Thank God for the favour I received in Jordan; may it continue (Proverbs 3:3-4).
- Praise God for the study group; may He use it, and may others come to the next ones.
- Please pray for wisdom in the use of my time and help with admin.
- Pray that I will be able to recharge and have time for God.
- Ask God to direct me to those in need – in body, mind and spirit.
- Please pray for Mr Sabri, my CBR Team, Jofeh and Mr Yusef, and the work.
- Please pray for the establishment of an NGO and the right people to serve in it.

Not enough?

If you have any questions contact me!

- For more information, to become a member of CMS and receive *Prayerlines* and *Mission Update*, contact: **info@cms-uk.org**

- For a colourful version of my letter join my E-link at: **jamespat@btinternet.com** or view it on the CMS website **www.cms-uk.org**

- Why not volunteer or visit me?

Good Bye (*ma9 as salaama*) and God Bless (*Allah yibaarikum*).

Yours in Christ,

Michael

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