



Newsletter Jerusalem Baptist Church

Number 3 ~ May/June 2014

Theme Number: The Poor and Needy

COLOFON

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Be kind and merciful....

Be the living expression of God's kindness – kindness in your face, in your eyes, in your smile, in your warm greeting. In the slums we are the light of God's kindness to the poor.... Give them not only your care but also your heart. Because of God's goodness and love every moment of our life and be the beginning of great things. Be open, ready to receive and you will find Him everywhere. Every work of love brings a person face to face with God.

Mother Theresa

Deadline next issue:

Sunday, June 29, 2014

Distribution date next issue:

Sunday, July 6, 2014



Serving our Lord until He comes...



LETTER FROM THE PASTOR Dr. Al Nucciarone



MINISTERING TO THE POOR AND THE NEEDY

Years ago at a Moody Pastor's Conference, I heard O.S. Hawkins, then pastor of First Baptist in Orlando, Florida, speak about Jesus' command to remember the poor. Later he preached this same message to his home church. Of course, he believed Biblical teaching must always lead to action. So he encouraged the church to sponsor regular lunches and dinners for the poor folk of Orlando. God blessed in a great way and many came to know the Lord.

This summer I read about a church in Tampa, Florida, that made a commitment to be a real blessing to the poor and needy of their city. They reached out with medical help, tutoring programs, afternoon sports activities for the youth, and counseling and help for unwed mothers. Their church became a virtual spiritual hospital which God used to meet the physical and spiritual needs of the community. It grew into one of the largest churches in the U.S.A.

***"Defend the cause of
the weak and
fatherless;
maintain the rights
of the poor and
oppressed."
Psalm 82:3***

The Bible is full of many references to the poor and needy.

Of course Psalm 82 is speaking here of the truly poor and oppressed. They are the innocent ones. We know that some people experience poverty because they are lazy, stingy, and love pleasure. (Prov.6:10, 11:24, 21:17).

We know of the story of the prodigal son in Luke 15. He took money from his father, spent it on everything, and when a famine occurred, he became in dire need and ran back home.

We must be careful to commit our resources only to those who are truly in need. For those in need, we are commanded to show kindness to them. We are instructed to not be hardhearted or tightfisted toward our poor brothers (Dt. 15:7). Paul shares these words in Galatians 2:10: "All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do."

*"Blessed is he who has regard for the weak; the Lord delivers him in times of trouble."
Psalm 41:1*

God does promise blessing to those who consider the poor. Proverbs 29:6 speaks of the king who judges the poor with fairness. His throne will be secure. We are protected by God as we help the poor. We are promised treasure in heaven as we sell our possessions and give to the poor.

Isaiah 58 sets forth a complete agenda for those who seek to help the needy. It talks of those who loosen the chains of injustice and set the oppressed free. It speaks of those who share food with the hungry and provide the poor wanderer with shelter. We are to clothe the naked and help our own. When we do this God will make our light shine. We will be healed. Our righteousness will go before us and the glory of the Lord will be our rear guard. God will also answer us when we call upon Him and He will guide us. We will be strengthened and we will be fruitful.

This passage in Isaiah has encouraged me in my ministry. Of course our desire is to minister to both the physical and spiritual needs of people. When we go to Tel Aviv to minister to the refugees, especially those from Dafur in Sudan, we have gone with food and blankets. We also bring Bibles and other Christian literature. In spite of the hard work and inconvenience, we experience the joy of the Lord. It is worth it all.

- ⇒ **God does not ask about our ABILITY or our INABILITY, but about our AVAILABILITY.**
- ⇒ **Kindness is a language which the deaf can hear and the blind can see.**
- ⇒ **Compassion is pity inclining one to spare or help.**

Our Refugee Ministry in Tel Aviv

By Pastor Al Nucciarone

I thank the Lord for opening up a ministry to the poor and needy in Tel Aviv. A few years ago I was invited by Tony Simon of the Voice of the Wilderness, to join him on their Friday night outreaches. We first met for Bible study, prayer, and a meal. Then we headed out. I was amazed as we went there with a team of 10 to see the great mission field in that needy city. In the area around Levinsky Park people from all over the world came to shop, eat, play, and work. Our goal was to distribute Bibles and Christian literature. We also sought to engage people in a conversation about the Lord.



The openness of the people was incredible. The dedication of the team members was also an encouragement to me. As the Lord brought refugees



from Sudan to Israel our ministry there changed somewhat. There were pressing physical needs. We quickly set up a soup kitchen of sorts in the park. During the cold months we brought blankets to those refugees who had to sleep outside. Together with the physical help, we gave out Bibles in Arabic and Tigrinya (Ethiopian). We

even had a chance to show the Jesus film with a portable smart phone projector and a screen. It is amazing what high tech can do.

On occasions we would have musicians who would contribute some of their talents. We even had the Muslim refugees singing Christian songs with us. We shared the Word of God with them.





Today many of these refugees have been repatriated and so our ministry there has again changed gears. We faithfully go down every Friday and pray for divine appointments. I like bringing my guitar so I can use it to minister the gospel in song. Often on Saturday Tony takes groups to some of the detention centers in the Negev to minister to some of the Sudanese refugees.

Do pray for us as we minister in Tel Aviv. Many from Jerusalem Baptist have ministered with us. All have experienced the joy and blessing of the Lord and say it is worth it all.

INTERESTED TO JOIN US ON A FRIDAY NIGHT?
Contact Pastor Al for more information.

*Lord, why did you tell me to love all men as
my brothers?*

*I have tried, but I come back to you
frightened.*

*Lord, I was so peaceful at home,
so comfortably settled.*

I was well furnished, and I felt so cozy.

I was alone – I was at peace.

Sheltered from wind and the rain, kept clean.

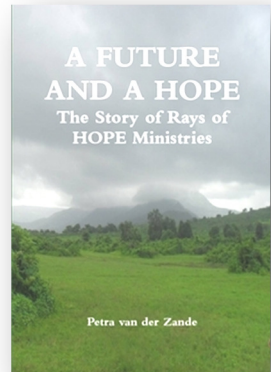
Michael Quoist

INDIA ADVENTURE

by Billie Nucciarone

When we think of India, we think of the fact that it is the largest democracy in the world with one billion people. Or maybe we think of historic monuments like the Taj Mahal or the many Hindu Temples. Or maybe we think of Mahatma Gandhi. In some ways India is like Israel. It is a country like Israel which is surrounded by not so friendly nations. It is actually a popular destination for Israeli's, especially for young people who have just finished their military duty with the Israeli Defense Force. They go there to explore the sites, enjoy the food, meditate in the temples, and possibly experiment with drugs.

Our first exposure to India was in 2010 when we went on a family mission trip to help a pastor and his orphanage in Mumbai. Manoj Magar is a great man of God who is only 35 years old and has planted 6 churches and started an orphanage with 70 children. It was a privilege to work with him. We invited him to Israel to visit us. He came in 2012 and we took him to see the sites and arranged for him to speak in several churches. His testimony and stories are similar to those of George Mueller of Bristol. A sister in our church, decided to write about a book about him which is now in print. It is called "A Future and a Hope", by Petra van der Zande.¹



Our church and several others churches here in Jerusalem have continued to pray for him and contribute to his ministry. In the providence of God, our daughter Emily got a job with a relief organization in New Delhi. The Lord gave us the opportunity to visit her and India again a few weeks ago. While in Delhi I had a chance to preach in 2 churches. The first was the Delhi Bible Fellowship with Pastor Jeremy. This church was actually started by Murray Carter, a missionary friend we knew in Italy.

¹ Copies can be ordered through: www.lulu.com



Also my good friend from Dallas Seminary, Ramesh Richard, pastored this church in the 90's. In fact, the Sunday I preached there, Ramesh was in Delhi and was able to come to one of the services. We had lunch together and renewed our fellowship.

We also have a sister in our church here in Jerusalem who is from Nagaland, a province of India near the Burma border. She encouraged me to contact her former pastor, Rev. Alem, in Delhi. I did and he invited me to preach in his church as well. It is a Baptist Church with people from Nagaland who speak the Ao language (all speak English, however). Nagaland was once a head hunting society. Then a Baptist missionary, Dr. Clark, came and preached the Gospel. Now Nagaland is almost 95% Baptist. What a testimony. This church in Delhi has a wonderful choir that has sung before the President of India. I invited them to come to Israel.



MIRACLES IN MUMBAI

During the week we flew down to Mumbai to visit Manoj and the orphanage. We were so encouraged to see that the orphanage has grown from about 45 children in 2010 to 70 children today. We also heard about a new church plant at the Hope Center in the middle of a red light district in a slum. The greatest miracle, however, was to see what God has been doing about the City of



Hope. Years ago, God gave Manoj a vision to start a City of Hope on the outskirts of Mumbai (which is the old Bombay) which could house 1000 orphans, a school, a hospital, a home where women will be able to escape from prostitution and live productive lives, and a place where people with AIDS can come to die with dignity.

Suffice it to say that God is working and we thank Him!
Another exciting development is that Manoj has asked us to develop the whole sport program for the orphanage. We may also be used to help them as they build athletic facilities. Praise God there is now an FCA India ministry with a national director.

THE MIRACLE OF ASHALAYA

By Billie Nucciarone

While we [Pastor Al and Billie] were in India we visited Ashalaya the Orphanage run by Manoj Magar whom many of you met. When we were there 3 years ago they had about 45 orphans. Today they have 70. I would like to tell you about the miracles we saw while we were there this time. God has done amazing things that can be an encouragement to us, too.





Manoj's Father, selling fruit outside Ashalaya

More than 3 years ago Manoj was driving down a highway when he received a phone call from a man he didn't know. This man asked if he could meet Manoj to talk with him and Manoj answered that he was on the highway at the moment but that he would be glad to meet the man the next day. The man answered that

he wanted to talk with Manoj that very day and said he would be willing to drive to where Manoj was on the highway and meet him there. So that's what happened. They stopped on the side of the highway and Manoj got into his car. The man said his name was Mr. Kapoor and that he had recently seen a television speaker say that it was a good thing to give to charity. Since he didn't know of any charities, he asked around and someone told him about Ashalaya and the work Manoj and his group were doing there. At that meeting he pledged to give \$120 a month to the orphanage. And he has been faithful in doing this since that time. He has come to consider Manoj as his friend and has been a help to Manoj in business matters.

God has answered prayer concerning the kindergarten in the red light area of a slum, too. When we were in India 3 years ago Manoj showed us the kindergarten they had in this area. The building they were using was just one long narrow room. Manoj said at the time that they would love to buy the three or four adjoining rooms so that they could make a larger kindergarten. Since that time they have been able to buy three adjoining rooms and Mr. Kapoor has helped Manoj with making contracts, etc. in the purchase. They have started another church meeting on Sunday afternoons in this kindergarten in the slum.



Pastor Manoj, Mr. Kapoor and Pastor Al

Some of you may remember that when Manoj was here a year ago he said that right before he left for Israel he had been informed that the building they were renting for the orphanage was going to be sold and that they could have first chance at buying it. It would cost \$200,000. Of course, Manoj did not have the money. He was told he would have to put down \$66,000 as a down payment. Then, out of the blue a friend of Manoj's named Benjamin heard about it and gave \$60,000 toward the down payment and another friend gave \$6,000. So, they had the down payment. A miracle.



But then Manoj started thinking that the seller could change his mind at some point down the road or up the price, if they didn't have an official document to record the transaction. When he told the owner that he would like to have an official document, the owner said, O.K. but in that case he needed a larger down payment. He wanted \$60,000 more and the document would cost \$10,000. It was at that point that Mr. Kapoor said he would give \$60,000 for the building. What a miracle.

Mr. Kapoor is not a Christian (yet). He is a businessman who owns 4 or 5 large buildings that he rents out to foreign companies like Siemens, etc. because foreign companies cannot own land in India. But of course they still lacked the \$10,000 for the document. At that point Manoj received an email from two girls who had visited the orphanage more than 3 years ago. He had not heard from them since. In the email the girls said that they had been collecting something like bottle caps for the last 3 years and they had made \$11,000 doing so. They asked if Manoj could use the money now or if he wanted them to hold it for him. So, once again the Lord miraculously provided.



But I think this final miracle I am going to tell you about is the most exciting of all. You all may remember that God gave Manoj a vision of starting a City of Hope on which he would have an orphanage to house up to 1,000 children, a school, a hospital, a place for aids victims to die with respect, and a place for women who have gone

into prostitution because they have

nowhere else to go, etc. His dream is to have 30 acres of land just outside Mumbai. While we were in India three years ago he took us to see several pieces of land that were available for this. Even though we believe in miracles it was somewhat difficult to imagine that Manoj would ever have the money to buy the land, put in water, electricity, roads, and everything else that would be needed. But, a short time ago Manoj saw a piece of land that was near Mumbai, had a river running by one side of it, and was near where the new airport for Mumbai is to be built. However, he couldn't find out who was selling the land. So he asked Mr. Kapoor to help him find the seller and he showed the land to him. Mr. Kapoor found the seller, and found out that 180 acres of land were available for sale. Then, out of the

blue, Mr. Kapoor decided to buy the whole piece of land at \$50,000 an acre. He has decided to develop a township on the land, putting in water, electricity, roads and a bridge to make access to the land easier. And, he is giving Manoj and the orphanage 10 acres of land free and selling them 20 acres more.

Mr. Kapoor has also started referring to the orphans as "our" children. He says if they can give their children food, a place to live and an education, they will be ready to face the world. What a wonderful miracle this is. Is anything too hard for the Lord?



Pastor Manoj and his family

Emily Nucciarone has been on a month-long assignment in the Philippines where she was helping on the island of Samar that was hit by a severe Typhoon. She returned to India on April 28th to finish a final two weeks there, then, Lord willing, she will come to Israel for a week then return to India just to move her things to the Philippines where she will work for one year. We thank the Lord for His leading in this new assignment.

Allison Nucciarone is finishing up her semester in London and is travelling some during this spring break. She will be with us in June and July and then back to school for the fall hoping to graduate in December.

A Note from Sandy Wingate



In answer to Sandy's prayers the

Lord provided her with a 2-bedroom apartment, including all the furniture she needed. Her desire is for her new home to truly be used for His Kingdom purposes. As an added blessing, she was able to adopt a cat which she named Tula (from the Hebrew word *chatula*), which means female cat. Another answer to prayer is Sandy's three 8¹/₂ hour days of work each week with her online job.

Even though she made more hours than usual in March, she needs consistent income to be able to pay for the rent.

Singing in the choir of Mobile's Jewish Community, Sandy felt it right to explain to the Rabbi who she was. As he didn't fully understand what it meant to be an evangelical Christian, he asked Sandy to write to him exactly what she believed in, which she did. The next choir practice Sandy wondered if she was going to be kicked out, but the Rabbi told her she was always welcome.

"Thank you so much for praying for me and for being interested in what the Lord is doing in my life, whether in Jerusalem or Mobile."

If you'd like to receive Sandy's personal newsletter by e-mail, please write to: sandywingate@mail2go.net

Praying with Thanksgiving and a Humble Heart



A sister from JBC sent us the following testimony.

In 1983 she went on a 3-month mission trip to India. Her host was an Indian family with a special ministry to widows and orphans and whoever came to their door.

The mother, Yasmin, was born in northern India. As a child she sat on the lap of Sadhu Sundar Singh, the famous Indian missionary, when he taught in her village. As most of the Christians were poor, compared to the often wealthy Hindus and Muslims, Yasmin experienced many miracles in answer to prayer.

Each morning the family had a two-hour prayer time from 10 a.m. till noon. Most Indian families buy a large sack of rice each month, which is their staple food. Many times Yasmin lacked food, but the Lord always provided. Anyone that came to their door for help was welcomed with food, tea, money (if they had any) and prayer.

Having no fridge and only limited electricity, each day the food had to be prepared afresh.

Many a day, when the family had nothing to eat, someone would knock on their gate. Often, one of the people they had ministered to in the past by practical means or prayer, would in turn bless them with food.

Hindu and Muslim weddings in the village were always celebrated in big style. Often, the leftover food was distributed to the poor.

Yasmin and her family never asked or begged for anything. They only prayed with thanksgiving in their hearts. They loved their fellow men and tried to be obedient to Jesus' call to serve others in humility.



“Stewardship is the use of God-given resources for the accomplishment of God-given goals.”

Ron Blue

Sadhu Sundar Singh (1889 -1929) was an Indian Christian missionary. In the early 1940s a native missionary of South India led Sundar's brother Rajender Singh to faith and baptized him in Punjab. Rajender referred to many miracles performed by Sundar Singh and people converted to Christ under his ministry. Sadhu Sundar Singh is treasured by many as a formative figure in the development of the Christian church in India.



- ⇒ **The Bible contains more than 300 verses on the poor, social justice and God’s deep concert for both.**
- ⇒ **Action springs not from thought, but from a readiness to responsibility. Dietrich Bonhoeffer**
- ⇒ **No need to search for a program of action. The world and suffering, humanity create the agenda for those who have eyes for human misery, ears for the stories of oppression and degradation and hearts to respond to the distress of our human family. Basil Hume.**
- ⇒ **Compassion is hard because it requires the inner disposition to go with others to the place where they are weak, vulnerable, lonely and broken. But his is not our spontaneous response to suffering. What we desire most is to do away with suffering by fleeing from it or finding a quick cure for it. Henry J.M. Nouwen.**
- ⇒ **In Jesus, the service of God and the service of the least of the brethren were one. Dietrich Bonhoeffer**
- ⇒ **Money as money is not evil. It speeds on errands of mercy and lends itself to a thousand philanthropies. It feeds the hungry, clothes the naked.... It is the insensate love of riches which is the perilous thing. W.E. Sangster.**

Margaret Nicholl Laird (1897 –1983) was an American missionary of the Baptist Mid-Missions who worked in the French colony of Ubangi-Shari and independent Central African Republic (CAR) from 1922 until the 1960s. She was one of the founders and longest serving missionaries of the Baptist Mid-Missions in the CAR. Margaret Laird also contributed significantly to the preparation of the Bible in the Sango language.

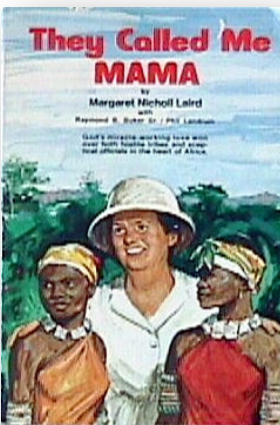


Born in Englewood, Colorado, Margaret had a Finnish Lutheran mother and an Irish Episcopalian father. In 1919 she graduated from Moody Bible School and studied nursing in order to qualify as a medical missionary. Inspired by the example of Hudson Taylor, founder of the China Inland Mission, she declined the missionary society's salary and became a faith missionary. In 1922 Margaret joined a Baptist Mid-Missions missionary group which

began to work in the French colony of Ubangi-Shari. Two years later she married widower Guy Laird and together they opened a mission station among the Banda people at a town called Ippy, where she worked as a nurse until 1964.

The Ippy Hospital included 60 beds, two operating theaters and a 1,000 English-language medical textbook library. The dispensary she helped establish became an important medical center for the whole region.

She described her life as a missionary in the CAR in a book entitled "They called me Mama" (1975 – Moody Press).



Following is an excerpt from the book.



God's Amazing Provision

“While working as a missionary in Africa I saw God provide in many ways. One of God’s provisions was especially unusual. We received mail only once a month and that month I received a package from a man I had known for years. He wrote that he was going through some things and found three old copies of the Reader’s Digest. He was about to throw them away then thought that they would not be old to Margaret Laird in Africa. So he wrote, “On the spur of the moment, I am sending these three Digests and hope that somehow they afford a bit of enjoyment.”

It had been a long time since I had seen anything like that so I sat up late that night reading one of the copies. One article was about treatment for burns. Researches had discovered that in many cases even when the burn didn’t cover large areas, the pain was so intense that the victims died from the shock when they should have responded to the treatment. It went on to say that they had discovered that tannic acid seemed to relieve the shock of the pain almost immediately.



As I read this I thought, *yes, but I have no tannic acid.* I kept reading. The last paragraph said, “In case you are caught in a place with no tannic acid and someone’s fingers are badly burned, make a cup of good strong tea and stick the burned fingers in it. The tea’s tannic acid will do the work.”

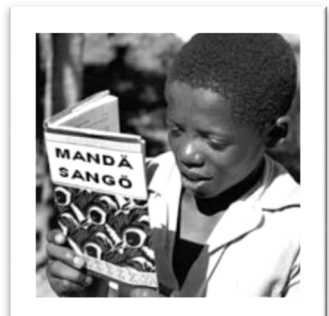
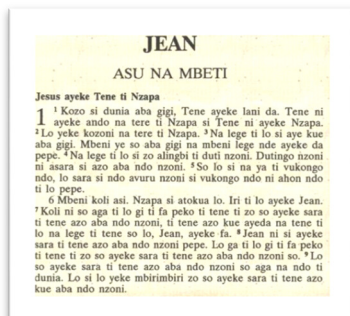
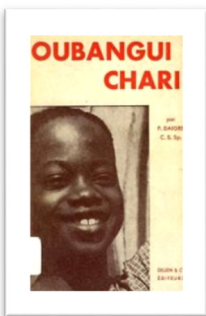
The next morning as I came up from the dispensary, I heard yelling and screaming. A crowd came into the yard with a young man who had been caught in a great brush fire. His abdomen and the insides of his legs were burned a little. His back was free from burns, but the entire front area of his chest as well as his legs and feet were burned badly. You could see the ribs in some places. The rest of his body was like raw meat with the blood oozing all around. The poor fellow was screaming with pain.

My first thought was that the burn covered such a large area that it would be impossible to do anything for him. Then the article I had read the night before flashed through my mind.

I hurriedly brewed a couple pots of strong tea and sent for a watering trough used for the goats. After washing it I began pouring in the tea. I had the tub over half full of the strongest tea I could make. We lifted the fellow in and his screaming stopped a few minutes later. He relaxed and was sleeping within a few minutes.

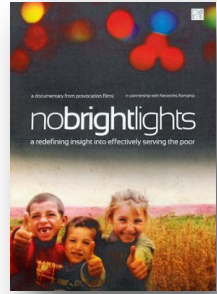
I kept that young man in the tea bath for about four weeks, giving him all the fluids and syrups and nourishing things to eat that I could. He came through just fine, although his chest lost its pigment to turn him black.

Over a year later, a man came in with a goat and a chicken for a gift for “Mama”. I told him that was very lovely, but why had he brought it? He opened his shirt and showed me his chest. It was the same young man. Then he told me how good God had been to him in the village. Not only he, but his mother and two brothers and a number of others from his village had found Christ as their Savior during the time he was at the mission. He had stayed on at the mission for a time to learn to read the New Testament and to write. Then he had been given a job as a clerk and was permitted to hold meetings in his courtyard. God continued to use him to bring others to Christ. All because of three copies of the Reader’s Digest. How good it is to know that God has servants who will do whatever He tells them. God got that information in my hands in time to save the young man’s life. Not only was he healed physically, but nearly his entire family found Christ. God is so good!”

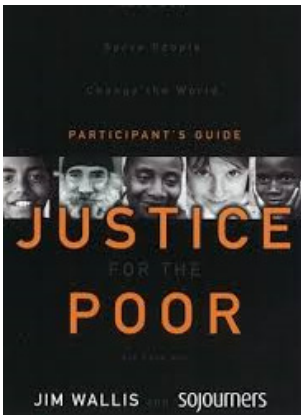


BOOK & DVD REVIEW

No Bright Lights gives an up close and personal profile of Networks Romania, a Christian relief organization reaching out to some of Romania's poorest people. In a shifting social and political environment, many Romanian children find themselves abandoned to the streets where they experience extreme poverty and injustice. Networks Romania works with the community to help stabilize families through word and deed expressions of the Gospel. In the course of its work Networks Romania has found itself asking profound questions about the nature of effective outreach to the



poor: Is it possible that charity sometimes does more harm than good? Is the current “hit and run” approach to missions really effective? Networks Romania workers share their profound insights into these and other questions with conviction and compassion. Their conclusions speak to the necessity of sharing community with the poor as opposed to doing ministry to the poor, the importance of understanding the rhythms and norms of differing cultures and differentiating between real and perceived needs. *No Bright Lights* takes us on an enlightening journey and delivers a critical message that may redefine the way we look at outreach. Approx. 46 minutes. Available at www.Christianbook.com



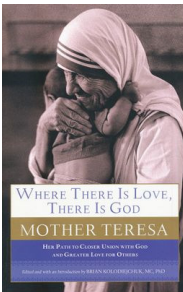
Justice for the Poor

Pack containing one softcover guide and one DVD.

'When the wealthy are dying from diseases of overabundance and the poor are dying from inadequate health care, poor diets, and stress-related illnesses, there is spiritual disease in society. Justice for the Poor recaptures the biblical vision that links poverty with justice. Jesus' life and teaching shows a deep compassion toward the poor and marginalized. His messages often highlight the injustices shown to the poor and the prejudices the well-off have against them. How can we learn from the poor? What is our responsibility to care for the poor and

to advocate for justice on their behalf? Jim Wallis and Sojourners, in this six-session participant's guide, designed for use with the Justice for the Poor video, will engage your small group to take action. Sessions include: 1. Burger King Mom: Being Poor in America 2. Is There Something Wrong With the Prosperity Gospel? 3. At the Corner of Church and State: What's the Proper Role of Each in Caring for the Poor? 4. The Gospel According to New Orleans 5. Outside the Gate: The Poor and the Global Economy 6. Beyond 'Serial Charity' to a Just Society'

The six-session small group Bible study, Justice for the Poor, from Jim Wallis and Sojourners explains how to connect biblical faith with contemporary responses to poverty. This pack includes one softcover Participant Guide and one DVD. Available at www.Christianbook.com



"What you are doing I cannot do, what I'm doing you cannot do, but together we are doing something beautiful for God, and this is the greatness of God's love for us." — Mother Teresa, from *Where There Is Love, There Is God*

In this book, Mother Teresa's relationship with God and her commitment to those she served—the poorest of the poor—is powerfully explored in her own words. Taken largely from her private lessons to her sisters, published here for the first time, ***Where There Is Love, There Is God*** unveils her extraordinary faith in, and surrender to, God's will.

Called to be a missionary of charity, a carrier of God's love to each person she met, especially those most in need, she believed each person is in some way called to be a carrier of God's love. Available as Paperback and e-Book at www.Christianbook.com

- ⇒ **Kindness is a warm breeze in a frigid climate, a radiant heat that melts the iceberg of fear, distrust and unhappiness.**
- ⇒ **The person who never notices the person next to him can never move beyond and see the 'incognito' Christ in him. Frank Wright**
- ⇒ **He who is waiting for something to turn up might start with his own shirt sleeves.**

The Jewish Viewpoint of Giving to Charity



Tzedakah, commonly used to signify charity, is based on the Hebrew word (,ןָדָקָה *Tzedek*) meaning righteousness, fairness or justice. In Judaism, *tzedakah* refers to the religious obligation to do what is right and just - important parts of living a spiritual life. Unlike philanthropy or charity, which is completely voluntary,

tzedakah is a religious obligation, which must be performed regardless of financial standing, and must even be performed by poor people.

Traditional Jews commonly practice tithing 10% of their income to support those in need. In many Jewish homes (and shops) you'll find a *pushke*, a box for collecting coins for the poor. Jewish youths are continually going from door to door collecting for various worthy causes. A standard mourner's prayer includes a statement that the mourner will make a donation to charity in memory of the deceased. In many ways, charitable donations have taken the place of animal sacrifices in Jewish life: giving to charity is an almost instinctive Jewish response to express thanks to God, to ask Him for forgiveness, or to request a favor. According to Jewish tradition, the spiritual benefit of giving to the poor is so great that a beggar actually does the giver a favor by giving the person the opportunity to perform *tzedakah*. Special acts of *tzedakah* are performed on significant days, e.g. at weddings. During Passover it is traditional to be welcoming towards hungry strangers, and feed them at the Gentiles; contrary to popular belief, Jews do not just "take care of our own."

The Torah teaches us to resist any temptation to view the poor as somehow different from ourselves while the Tanakh sets forth numerous protections of the poor. The Jubilee and the *sh'mitah* are examples of commandments in the Torah designed to protect the poor.

In Judaism, giving to the poor is not viewed as a generous, magnanimous act; it is simply an act of justice and righteousness, the performance of a duty, giving the poor their due. But even those who are themselves in



When a needy person stands at your door, God himself stands at his side.

Hebrew Proverb

meeville.com

need are expected to give charity. We have an obligation to avoid becoming in need of *tzedakah*. A person should take any work that is available, even if he thinks it is beneath his dignity, to avoid becoming a public charge. However, if a person is truly in need and has no way to obtain money on his

own he should not feel embarrassed to accept *tzedakah*. No person should feel too proud to take money from others. Refusing charity is considered a transgression.

Holiday Calendar

May

- 5 *Yom HaZikaron*—Remembrance Day Fallen Soldiers and Victims of Terror
- 6 *Yom Ha'Atsma'ut* – Israel's 66th Independence Day
- 18 *Lag Ba Omer*
- 28 Jerusalem Day

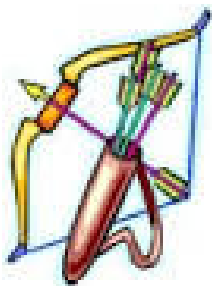


June

- 3 & 4 *Shavuot* – Feast of Weeks
- 8 & 9 Pentecost

“He who oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honors God.” Proverbs 14:31

LAG BA'OMER



Lag Ba'omer is celebrated on the 33rd day of the Counting of the Omer, (18th day of the Hebrew month of *Iyar*) (Usually in May or June.) According to the *Talmud*, 24,000 students of Rabbi Akiva died from a divinely sent plague during the Counting of the Omer. In the years that followed, Jews

began to celebrate the end of the plague on *Lag Ba'omer*. Rabbi Akiva continued with only five students, whom he taught how to fight the Roman conquerors. To avoid suspicion, they dressed up as hunters carrying bows and arrows, and went to the woods to practice. Eventually, the students joined the Bar Kochba rebels in their fight for freedom. In ancient times farmers used to worry (they actually still do) during the Counting of the Omer, whether the new grain crops would succeed or fail. Israeli spring weather is always unstable. Hot desert winds (*sharav*) can dry out the seedlings or burn the standing grain. Another danger is locusts, other insects or plant diseases. Until the farmer knows the outcome of his respective harvests, he is not in the mood for private or public celebrations.



All restrictions of mourning are lifted on the 33rd day of the Omer. Amongst Ashkenazi Jews, weddings, parties, listening to music, and haircuts are commonly scheduled to coincide with this day. On the eve of the holiday, huge bonfires are lit all over the country. Children often begin to collect wood after the *Pesach* holiday.

The following day, families enjoy picnics and outings into the woods. The Meron celebrations date from the time of Rabbi Isaac Luria (1534-1572). Since then it became customary to give three-year-old boys their first haircuts (*upsherin**) during *Lag Ba'omer*.

Upsherin is a Jewish haircutting ceremony, Kabbalistic in origin, held when a Jewish boy is three years old. Because there was no Hebrew or Yiddish name for the custom, it was called by the Yiddish word for cutting off the hair: "*upsheren*". In the Chassidic community, the *upsherin* marks a male child's entry into the formal educational system and the commencement of *Torah* study. From now on, it will wear a *kippah**



(*yarmulke*) and *tzitit**. The child will be taught to pray and read the Hebrew alphabet. So that *Torah* should be "sweet on the tongue," the Hebrew letters are covered with honey, and the child licks them as he reads.

Some communities weigh the hair that is cut off in the *upsherin* ceremony, and give the amount to charity. If the hair is long enough, it may be donated to a charity that makes wigs for cancer patients. Other customs include having guests snip off a lock of hair, and encourage the child to put a coin in a *tzedakah** box for each lock that is cut.

The Bible sometimes compares human life to the growth of trees. Leviticus 19:23 states that one is not permitted to eat the fruit that grows on a tree for the first three years. Some Jews apply this principle to cutting a child's hair, and therefore only at the age of three does the child get its first haircut. Chassidic Jews hope that the child, like a tree that grows tall and eventually produces fruit, will grow in knowledge and good deeds, and someday have a family of his own.

Some communities call a boy before his first haircut an *orlah* - the same word used for a tree in its early years.



THANK YOU!

From Petra van der Zande

Over the last two years I've already had to fly to the Netherlands a few times because my mother was gravely ill. The last three times she recovered the moment I landed and we spent a wonderful week together in the nursing home where she lived.

This time, however, it seemed the 'real' thing and I knew that her time was running out. "I want to wave good-bye to you, Mom, when it's time for you to leave for Heaven," I had always joked.

It was not to be. My precious 93 year-old mother had slipped into Eternity the evening before my flight the next morning, March 25th. Flying in from Sweden, my youngest sister also came too late.

Despite the grief and sorrow, I felt carried by the love and prayers from my spiritual family back home in Israel.

During the week before the cremation, I witnessed one miracle after another. Prior to my mother's death, my middle and younger sister had not spoken to each other. Now we had to share one (small) house for 24 hours and make important decisions together. Everything was done in harmony and one accord – a miracle!



An added blessing was that nature had burst into joy – the weather was beautiful, sunny and spring flowers were everywhere. Last year, it snowed during this time, and usually, the Dutch weather is cold, rainy and grey! The service at the cemetery was led by the Dutch Reformed minister who had visited my mother regularly.

"I have never been to a Christian funeral before," my sister's friend told her. The sweet fragrance of God's love was present during that service. We were mourning a loss, but celebrating a life!

The Sunday before returning home to Israel I decided to visit a small Baptist congregation in the center of Haarlem. (Where the famous Corrie ten Boom lived.) The moment I set foot in the building it felt like 'home in Jerusalem'. The same warm welcome, the friendliness, the small building. Pastor Paul Wiersma allowed me to bring greetings from JBC.



The congregation, about 60 people, never had a visitor from abroad before, and were happy to welcome one all the way from Jerusalem! About the same time JBC celebrated Communion in Jerusalem, we also did in Haarlem – I really felt connected.

So next time you're in the Netherlands, be sure to visit our sister congregation in Haarlem. You'll receive a warm

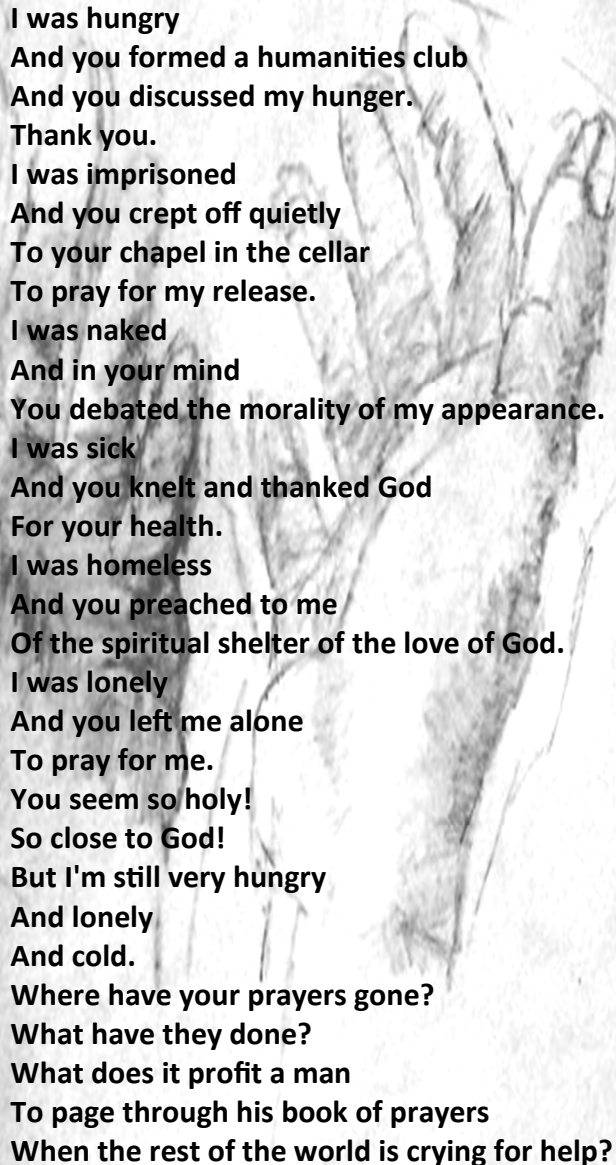
welcome, like we always try to give visitors entering JBC.



So, thank you again, for your prayers, your emails and notes – it has meant so much to me! *Petra*



Baptisten Gemeente Haarlem, Begijnhof 10, 2011 HE Haarlem
<http://www.baptistenhaarlem.nl>
Rev. Paul Wiersma



**I was hungry
And you formed a humanities club
And you discussed my hunger.
Thank you.
I was imprisoned
And you crept off quietly
To your chapel in the cellar
To pray for my release.
I was naked
And in your mind
You debated the morality of my appearance.
I was sick
And you knelt and thanked God
For your health.
I was homeless
And you preached to me
Of the spiritual shelter of the love of God.
I was lonely
And you left me alone
To pray for me.
You seem so holy!
So close to God!
But I'm still very hungry
And lonely
And cold.
Where have your prayers gone?
What have they done?
What does it profit a man
To page through his book of prayers
When the rest of the world is crying for help?**

M. Lunn

The Month That was: March



Br. Isam and Pastor Al pray for Canon Andrew White. March 9

More Dutch visitors!



This dear sister shared her testimony about her struggle with cancer and blessed us with a beautiful song: "My life is in Your hands".



Another amazing group: Polish/Irish believers visiting JBC on March 23rd.



Once a year, it's JBC's turn to host the "Men in Ministry" event. March 20 was a busy day.

The meeting involves a breakfast, which our sister Carolyn, helped with a few volunteers, turned into a FEAST.



The Month That was: April



April 19, Resurrection Sunday Breakfast at JBC

Established in 1925, the **Baptist House in Jerusalem** is one of Jerusalem's oldest Protestant institutions. Jerusalem Baptist Church (JBC) is a member of the Baptist Convention of Israel and is affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention of the United States. We operate under the *amuta* of the Baptist Convention of Israel.

Over the years, faithful congregants have joyfully served in many positions throughout Israel and partnered with many denominations and organizations to serve the Savior here. Each Sunday, the worship service is filled with people from many nations, and visitors from around the globe. You may be surprised to find someone from your hometown worshipping with us when you visit!

The purpose of JBC is to serve the interest of Jesus Christ in this city until He returns.

Sunday morning Prayer Meeting at 9.30 A.M.

Sunday Worship at 10:45 A.M.

Adult Sunday School at 9:30 A.M.

Children's Sunday School ages K-6. Older children are invited to attend the main service.

Communion: every first Sunday of the month.

Wednesday Prayer Meeting at 1:30 p.m.

Friday Ladies' Bible Study at 9.30 a.m.

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**SENIOR PASTOR
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DEACON
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**Dr. Al Nucciarone
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