

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Media Support News

I am writing from Israel. My heart has been heavy for the men and women on the news crews who face danger, discouragement and political controversy on location there. The purpose of MFI's Media Support Team is to encourage and pray for them and I felt God leading me to be there for them. I arrived in Israel last Friday and have met with a number of people. So that you can pray with me for them, I will share some of these experiences, but in order to honor our policy of confidentiality, I will limit the mention of their names to ensure privacy.

Some impressions as I arrived in Tel Aviv -- the plane was full, the hotels are full and it amazes me that people go about their business in such a normal way. All are thankful for the cease fire, but see it as a break in the fighting, not an end to it. With the news today of another journalist being killed by ISIS, there is an urgent need to hold these individuals up in prayer.

I have been welcomed with open arms. I met on the first day with the Executive Director of the Foreign Press Association in Israel. She said the government has approved about 700 credentials, but the Press Association has only allowed 430 into membership - they are very careful. These are the primary and preferred media to work with the government in Israel and in Gaza covering news from Beirut to Bagdad to Benghazi. They must prove they are mainstream Press. These journalists strive to be scrupulously fair to people and companies of different countries. If anyone misuses their clearance or is unethical in gathering news or is unfair in the telling of the story, they will no longer be cleared for entry. She told me how difficult it was for them during the last war of 50 days. She was part of the group that worked with the press at Gaza (read Hamas).

I will share much more in the [links below](#) about the situation there and about the purpose of the ministry of Media Support.

Who are we willing to help?

The Director of the Foreign Press Association, asked if we would be open to being of help to the Palestinians as well as the Israeli media, or whatever other persuasion the Press person would hold.

I assured her that we were open to minister to anyone who has a need. She has been instrumental in introducing me to others in the media.

We talked about what services to offer. She was interested in both personal and grief counseling. She said she wished that I had been here to meet with the family of the person who was beheaded for grief counseling and practical help.

Many opportunities are opening up. I hope to meet with two Bureau chiefs, with one of the leading pastors who also has a school for journalists; with the owner of the largest travel agency in Israel (a believer), a government official, and a couple who work with visiting writers, usually visiting from the USA.

My visit the Palestinian city of Ramallah.

On Monday, I went to Ramallah, which is a Palestinian city, to meet with the director of the BBC Media Action group.

I am sitting in the office of Media Action in Ramallah. I have met the Director. He is Palestinian and was born here. He has travelled to several countries because of his work. He is a very nice, kind, patient attentive host. He is trying to figure out who we are and what we

would do here. But because of his experiences, he believes we could be of help, especially in Gaza.

He was born in Gaza and has close relatives there. He told me that when his daughter was born they wanted to take her to Gaza to meet her family but was unable to. Gaza is a closed community. The gates are locked. You cannot go in or out.

His daughter saw her grandmother only once. When her grandmother contracted cancer she was allowed to come out for treatment. I believe that Tamar was about 8. At that point she was able to see her for a little time. It was the only time she was able to see her.

The sadness in the hearts of the people saddens me. They are so close and yet so far from each other.

They are all Muslim, but do not seem to practice strongly. One man went to a Lutheran church in Ramallah to study German. He never attended the church but wanted to study there.

I have now met Buthina Canaan Khoury. (Khoury means like a pastor.) She is from the only Christian town in Palestine. About 2000 people live there. Her brother has been the mayor. She invited me to come back with her to her village. She would show me around. The village is very old. I think back to the time of Jericho.

A cousin of hers lived in Gaza. She died in one of the attacks. Her one son was critically injured. He lost one leg above the knee, the other half way to the knee and had critical injured. She is a warm committed believer and a film maker. As she talked about her family, Palestine and Israel, her heart was broken. She said that until her country is free she will never be free. We talked about the peace agreement--she said that she will never have peace until she and her country are free of the choke hold that Israel holds over them.

Her cousin is in the hospital in Jerusalem. She is not able to visit him without a pass from the Government of Israel. She invited me to come and meet her family and to see their town. It is near Jericho.

I am still in the office in Ramallah. My host just left. He has watched over me and made sure that I was comfortable. He and one of the other men just came up to me as he was leaving. He thanked me. He said that all felt a good vibe from me. Their office would always be open to me and anything they could do to help they would.

This is all so strange to me. The first time I have been in an office of all Palestinians and to be treated so graciously. They live in Palestine and are completely open to me as a Christian.

They work for a company that is funded by a nonprofit of the BBC. Their work is to provide help to the media people of this area.

Bob

Sent from my iPad

Further visits and possible schedules

I have spoken with a free lance writer and reporter who works with several groups and also with a couple where the husband has a serious case of cancer. Please pray for him.

Later I am scheduled to meet with the director of the Governmental Press Office. He wants to meet with me to tell me about a media conference to be held in Israel next year. He is inviting us to be a part in helping to organize this.

Other meetings that are scheduled include an invitation to go with a news team to the border of Syria. This will be to the war zone. They plan on doing an overview of the situation at present.

I am humbled by the doors that are opening and for the many opportunities for ministry. Please pray that God will direct my path and that workers will be available in MFI to continue this good work.

I will add to these notes as the days progress. God is faithful.