

Hope for Israel tour March 2006

The Hope for Israel tour 2006 was a very exciting experience as well as a challenge on a spiritual, physical and emotional level.

I was never bothered about the political situation. My life is in God's hands and I knew I wasn't putting myself deliberately in a dangerous situation. I wanted to experience the country of Israel, to meet the real people living there now, and of course, to see where Yeshua lived 2000 years ago. What ultimately prompted me to join the tour was seeing Moran's love for his people when he was talking about his life during his speaking tour in Switzerland last year. That's why I decided to join this tour and have no regrets about it; in fact, I want to go back to see and learn more! It still was quite a big decision though, as I knew I was going to be the only European in the group who were all from Southern California. But as it turned out, the group welcomed me and included me very well.

It was great to get my facts right regarding how the modern State of Israel came to exist, to swim in the Dead Sea, to see and stay at various kibbutzim, and to take a boat trip on the Sea of Galilee (I love boat trips here in Switzerland). One of the highlights of the trip was being able to experience the so very special atmosphere in Jerusalem, which cannot be compared with any other city on earth as well as seeing where Yeshua spent his last hours and where he eventually died. It was really good to see the various places because now when I read my Bible, I can picture them in my mind; it was so helpful to get to know the spiritual background of what happened thousands of years ago, which gave me a new understanding of how the Old and New Testaments are connected.

But what stood out for me was meeting with so many very different people from different backgrounds and learning about their life stories and culture. For instance, we met three families who lost their sons through various terror attacks and we were able to see their way to cope with that situation. I so much enjoyed having been invited to Shabbat dinner by Jewish families as well as having fellowship with people in a Lebanese messianic congregation and being part of a service lead by Jews from South America singing praise songs in Hebrew and English to South American tunes. One amazing part of the tour was hearing a personal account from a Palestinian believer whose life is constantly threatened because of his faith in Yeshua. I was also encouraged to hear the accounts of a Russian Jew talking about his ministry in Jerusalem and the fact that there are 16 congregations following Yeshua in Jerusalem alone.

I was overwhelmed by the sense of hope all these people have despite some dreadful experiences in their lives. This motivates me to pray for them but also to see my problems in the right perspective. These are things you do not get on a "normal" guided tour... only on a Hope for Israel tour.

I just want to thank Moran and Chris who have invested numerous hours to organize this trip. They have done a tremendous and absolutely brilliant job of it! I'm also very grateful to Shimon our Israeli tour guide who seems to know everything about any building, any landscape, any plant or animal in Israel and last but not least our great driver Eli who's made the impossible possible in some very tricky road situations. The whole trip was "sababa" which apparently means something like awesome in Hebrew.

If you are considering joining a Hope for Israel tour, I promise it will be an experience of a lifetime!

Irene, Switzerland