

# The Jerusalem Road

– May 1

Driving in Israel. Can't be that much different, right? I mean, after all, I have been driving for, well, a lot of years. So, get in the car, put the key in the ignition – oh, yeah, I forgot. First we open the lock on the gear shift – that's one key. Next we line up the star-shaped key with the lock on the steering wheel club, turn and open – that's two keys. Now I match up the key to disengage the computer lock on the engine, located on the steering column – that's three. NOW I can put the key in the ignition and turn it – um, turn it...oh, that's right, turn the steering wheel until the ignition key lines up. Good! The car is now running and we can depart. I need to go to the post office to pick up a package.

Let's see, make sure I use the turn signals for every turn so I do not get a ticket. The solid white line means I cannot cross it to turn left. The stop sign is red with a white hand on it. Make sure the headlights are on if I go on the short section of highway on the edge of town. What is the speed limit here in town? 70?! Oh, that's right, it is kph, not mph. Okay, I am now approaching the first traffic circle – everyone has to yield except for those in the circle. There are no traffic light here, just circles and stop signs with U-turns allowed on most streets. I have successfully negotiated the circle and am headed to the mercaz (center).

Oh, no, I have a policeman behind me and his lights are flashing! What did I do wrong? Should I stop here or move up further? I pull over and the policeman drives around me. Huh? Oh, of course! Here the policemen drive with their lights flashing all the time, so you can see they are nearby. They use their sirens if they want you to pull over. Whew! Be still my heart!

So, I am back on the road. I need to watch out for pedestrians as they have the right of way. That means if they will step out in front of you or push their baby carriage out, you had better stop. Many here assume you will stop and do not even look at traffic, but simply cross the road. Easiest way is to keep watch and stop for each pedestrian, waving them on. This takes defensive driving to a whole new level! ☺

Getting to the parking lot nearest the post office, I see there is one space left. Thank you, Lord! Arad is a town of 33,000 people, with few owning vehicles – and seemingly fewer parking spaces!

After squeezing into my spot, I lock up the car (in sequence!) and proceed to the post office. A guard standing outside inspects my purse before I can enter. There are few people in line as I have arrived early. All government offices are open morning and evening, closed in the afternoon, six days a week. That is unless there's a strike, or a holiday, or something...☺ At the counter I present the notice received in the mail. This particular box was sent the middle of December and has arrived here the beginning of April, which I understand is normal. Over three months! Since all packages and mail is hand stamped and processed, maybe that's not too bad. It gives me a new appreciation of the U. S. Post Office!

Driving the highways here in Israel has its own set of hazards. By law you must drive with your lights on, day and night, or get a stiff fine. Of course, that is only between October and April! Sheep, goats, donkeys and camels are sometimes loose on the road and you need to keep an eye out for them. In fact, there are large signs posted cautioning drivers to beware of camels on the edge of the road. You would not want to hit a camel when you are flying along at 90 kph! But the real danger are the other drivers. Most highways are two lanes, twisting and turning around hills (and cliffs in the Negev). For some reason many drivers here will pull out in the opposite lane to pass those in front of them, regardless of oncoming traffic. Cars and trucks are forced off the road to avoid a head-on collision, sometimes hitting people walking along the highway, usually Bedouins. I have seen a number of near misses in the short time I have been here. I find myself repeatedly holding my breath until cars are back in their lane. The latest figure of highway casualties is 312, so far this year, in a country of under 7 million people. Keep in mind that only a small percentage own cars and drive. Whenever you get in your car, please remember to pray for the safety of God's people on the roads of Israel.

It is spring here in Arad and the flowers and vegetation are beautiful. Everywhere you look are trees covered in brilliant pinks, seeming waterfalls of violet cascading over rocks and splashes of red and yellow in deep green foliage. Lining the roadways in the city are roses of various shades between tall palm trees, deep purple flower carpets, and splashes of hot pink along the edge of the traffic circles. Arad is a beautiful city with flower beds

everywhere. Living in the middle of the desert gives a new appreciation of colorful flowers and vegetation.

This past week I took a two-day trip to Eilat beside the Red Sea. The purple mountains of Jordan are close, as well as the border crossing to Egypt. The Red Sea is so beautiful and filled with fantastic fish and coral. Looking across the water, thinking of the Israelites caught between the sea and the fury of Pharaoh...I could almost feel the fear that must have consumed them. But God had them in His hand and no one could touch them. As I stood on the shore, looking at the deep blue water, I imagined it standing up in a great wall. I felt such awe for our Lord and His greatness.

On our return trip we stopped at the Valley of Timnah, the area of Solomon's mines. The mountain formations, the colors of the desert, the various shapes of the Acacia trees – it is all so glorious and beautiful. I visited a replica of the Tabernacle located here, set up in the same dimensions. The group offering tours are believers. It was incredible to walk through the Tabernacle hearing the description of every part from the perspective of Yeshua's sacrifice. The tour guide explained she cannot do that for unsaved tourists and must be cautious. However, sometimes she gets to do a tour for a believer and someone tags along. Afterward she has opportunities to answer all kinds of questions! They are struggling financially to stay in business, so please pray for this important ministry.

In May I will be accompanying the director of Christian Friends of Israel, on her rounds to the Holocaust survivors here in Arad. She visits with them, assessing their needs and situation. CFI is located in Jerusalem and depends on volunteers to complete the work.

Lura and Eddie, solely on their own, have a separate ministry to the Russian Holocaust survivors located here in Arad. Using donations solely for this project, they put together boxes of food staples, occasionally including a sweet dessert for a treat. These boxes are then delivered, taking along a Russian interpreter. I am now a part of this project, taking time to visit and pray with them. All of them are elderly and glad for company. One of the women is 106 years old!

As for an update on the ongoing situation with the Dati here in Arad...God is so good and we are thanking Him daily for His protection, His blessings and His plans. God's way is always the best way. As I reported last month,

a particular group of orthodox Jews has been harassing the believers here. Please understand this group is not the traditional orthodox, but a separate sect commonly called “the Blacks” and affiliated with Yad L’Achim. Everyone here has respect and a good rapport with the traditional rabbis, Orthodox students and Jewish people.

We had asked (and obviously received!) prayer from many of you concerning a demonstration that had been set up by this group. We were told to expect 300 or more. Approximately 150 of them showed up, bringing their children to help swell the numbers. They demonstrated outside the house of a widow with nine children. Using a loudspeaker, their rabbi addressed the Datim gathered together. He told many untruths and made incendiary statements about the believers, declaring none of the Datim will rest until the missionaries (their name for every believer) have been driven out of Arad. The believers had all gathered in the widow’s home one hour prior to their arrival, praying and praising God together. We asked for protection and salvation of the souls coming against us. The Lord was in the house and gave each one of us confidence and peace, as well as a Word that all would be okay. With the police in attendance, the entire demonstration lasted two hours. The Datim arrived quietly and left the same way. One of the students did stay behind, however, and discussed the scripture for 30 minutes with one of our men. It is my understanding he was a member of the Yad L’Achim group from Jerusalem or Tel Aviv. Two more students returned and they were then all asked by the police to leave. We know God’s Word does not return void and pray the scripture used will reach the heart of that young man. Please pray we have more opportunities to reach these men so we can help them know the real way to Jehovah. All the neighbors came out and stood in support of this widow who has been good to each one of them. Praise God, they are now more curious than ever about this ‘Y’shua’ they keep hearing about!

But that was not the end. The press was in attendance that evening, reporting the entire episode in the city paper (front page!), the Russian paper and it was picked up by one of the biggest Hebrew newspapers here in Israel. It was put on Israeli websites as well. In the city newspaper a large section of the article was given to the Datim for their stand against the believers. But the editor felt that believers deserved equal time. As a result, directly below the article of the Datim was printed an editorial letter written by a young pastor living here. He had written it earlier hoping, but not

expecting it would be printed. The letter told why and how we believe in Y'shua, that He is the Son of God and explaining how anyone can accept the Lord into their life and pray the Sinner's prayer. It was presented as an article, not a letter. Praise God! Only our Mighty God could arrange that!

It doesn't stop there...☺ Other incidents followed:

- jamming the lock at the chess club
- picketing our home and the chess club
- harassing the Russian chess players. The result of that was the chess players telling them to leave the believers alone. It seems they are frightened of the Russians (many of whom would qualify as wrestlers!) and they quickly left.
- Another day a man showed up to object to us giving out books. He is from a group against anyone giving out literature, including the Orthodox Jews. Very soon after, one of the Datim showed up. They then argued among themselves, leaving us completely alone!
- Picketers show up at the widow's house several days a week. This last time the children came out to sit and watch them. This seemed to bother and embarrass the Datim, leaving soon after.
- During all this time the believers continue to pray for the salvation of these men.

It gets even better! Last Monday was Holocaust Memorial Day. Arad held a memorial service in one of the parks. Eddie attended only to take pictures. Josef, the leader of the Holocaust Survivors here, was told by the city to choose four people to sit in the front seats to be honored.

Eddie was completely surprised when he was taken by the hand and led to the front. He was one of the four. He was being honored by all the survivors here for his humanitarian works to help them, supplying extra food, outings and friendship. He was seated among the city officials, Holocaust survivors **and with the same rabbis that led the demonstration denouncing him!**

These same men had to quietly honor Eddie in public.

"...whoever humbles himself will be exalted." (Matt. 23:12b)

Jesus tells us to pray for our enemies (Matt. 5:44) and to let Him be our Defender. We have not raised our voices, accused the Datim, launched a demonstration against them or spoken out against anyone. We have prayed

for our persecutors, asked the Lord to be our Banner and to glorify Himself through it all. He has done this. We are now hearing from people all over Israel. The news has gone out: “Believers in Arad are being harassed!” Believers all over the Holy Land are standing in the gap for us. Believers all over the world have heard and lifted all in prayer. God is doing what no man could do.

A statement by Pastor John Hagee, “Fear God so much that you will fear no man” is becoming reality. God is faithful and true, the great I AM, the One in control of all. We praise His name and thank all of you for your prayers. Each of us could feel your prayers that night – we knew you were each standing beside us right here in the Holy Land. May the Lord bless you!

On Holocaust Memorial Day, Israel has a way of honoring the six million Jews who suffered and died in WWII. At 10am sirens sound for two minutes all over the country. Everything and everyone stops what they are doing and stands in silence. Work ceases, music is turned off, cars stop in traffic and on highways with drivers exiting to stand by their vehicles. Everyone honors their memory. However, the survivors of that atrocity are now living in poverty, eking out an existence that is not consistent with who they are. Aged people in poor health live five and six flights up with no elevator. They cannot get out due to infirmities and are trapped, no longer prisoners in the concentration camps, but now prisoners in their own homes. Getting to the grocery store is difficult enough, but carrying any food up the stairs is nigh impossible. Old women bent over with osteoporosis, men sitting dejectedly in their homes – all with no hope as they know nothing of the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. I want the opportunity to bring the Light into their lives. Help me continue delivering packages of food and bringing smiles to their faces. Let’s do together what the Lord said, to “...give them a drink of water...” in His name.

If you feel the Lord speaking to your heart, and you would like to become a part of the work in Israel, please don’t put it aside. Listen, listen...He may be calling your name. Bless Israel and receive His blessing in return. If you would like to help keep me in Israel and be a part of feeding the Holocaust survivors, please send your contribution to:

Cindy Dillingham c/o Sue Heagy, P.O. Box 65228, San Antonio, Texas 78265

To dah raba! (Thank you very much!) and Shalom

*Sue Heagy*

Coming Soon!

A web page featuring the ministry here in Israel, the latest projects, and news. More in the next newsletter! 😊