



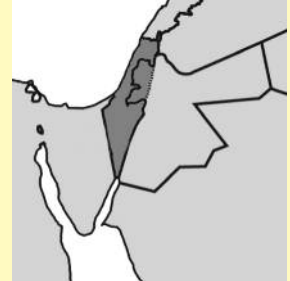
RCA Missionary Update

from the Visés

Palestinian Christians have reached a point of crisis, caught between Islamic and Israeli militancy. Many have left the area. Marlin and Sally Vis are engaged in a compassionate ministry to Palestinian refugees. They work with the Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees to help Palestinian Christians however they can. Marlin developed his pastoral gifts of teaching and preaching from his years as pastor and campus minister, and Sally has lots of experience with hospitality and administration. In addition to working with refugees, the Visés will host visitors from the United States and Canada who come to assist in their ministry.

Palestine/Israel facts:

- Population: 6,352,120
- Size: 20,770 square kilometers (slightly smaller than New Jersey)
- Major religions: 76.5 percent Jewish; 15.9 percent Muslim; 2.1 percent Arab Christian/Christian; 1.6 percent Druze; 3.9 percent unspecified



MINISTRY

Hospitality and Reconciliation

CONTACT

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LOCATION

East Jerusalem, Palestine/Israel

PARTNER

Middle East Council of Churches

Dear Friends,

January 2010

The least of them matter most to God.

Sally and I know that you support this foundational Biblical truth. We want to thank you for your ongoing support of the ministry that God has given us to do together. Middle Eastern Christians are in a world of hurt and the situation on the ground for them is not changing anytime soon. The Palestinian Christian Community continues to face difficult times, both economically and personally. They are pressed between the ongoing Occupation by the State of Israel and by increasing tension with their Muslim neighbors. Never have they needed us more! The Palestinian Christian Community is among the least of them that matter most to God.

We want you to know that we are well. We also want you to know that our mission to and with the Palestinian Christian Community has clarified and stabilized. The visa problem we had with the State of Israel seems resolved to the point where we can do what we feel called to do. We cannot live there permanently, but we don't have to. We can come and go and stay for extended periods. Last year we were in Jerusalem and the region for almost five months, and this year we expect to share time between here (Michigan) and there (Jerusalem) – up to six months in each place (God willing). This is good news for us and we thank God.

We have solidified our partnerships with a variety of ministries that serve the Christian Community in the region, as well as reach out to neighboring Muslims and Jewish people. We are working primarily with the Lutheran Church in Bethlehem. Rev. Mitri Raheb is the pastor there - <http://www.elcjl.org/cong/bethlehem/>.

I continue to serve on the local board of World Vision, and am also the RCA/CRC representative for CMEP - Churches for Middle East Peace - <http://www.cmep.org/>.



Sally and I are grateful for a new partnership with the Christian Reformed Church in America. There is so much promise here. We are very excited. Our work with the CRC particularly targets young adults. We are doing everything we can to engage this energetic group in areas of justice ministry. And they are responding in amazing ways.

One of the primary aspects of our ministry remains unchanged. We still bring people to the region in order to introduce them to the land, the culture and the people. We have three groups planned for 2010 – March, July and November. The March and November groups are nearly full and the July trip is filled by half. The response is overwhelmingly encouraging to us. There still is room in each of these trips and we've enclosed a brochure so that you can think about folks you might press to come with us from your church. We'd also love to talk with you about possibilities for you and your congregation to get involved with these trips and this important ministry in one of the most interesting and challenging places on earth.

There is so much more to tell you, but this is enough for now. We are well. The mission is thriving. And we are grateful. To be sure, we are grateful to God, but we are also grateful to you our faithful friends. Thank you.

Andre and Tony are twins. They drive bus for many of our groups. They are Christians. Andre and Tony, along with a few friends, started a Bible Study in East Jerusalem. This Bible Study has grown into a church. This church reaches across religious lines to impact dozens of young Palestinians for Jesus. We help Tony and Andre. And we are honored to do so.

Thank you for helping us, so that we can help people like Tony and Andre!

We love you.

Marlin and Sally Vis