

16 April 2020

Mercy Fund Appeal



As President of CMJ UK it is only rarely that I am more directly in touch with the wider CMJ family. It seems appropriate however that at this critical time I should do so. The letter from Daryl Fenton (Director, CMJ Israel) that follows expresses the opportunity for the Christ Church Mercy Fund to be a blessing to the poor in the Old City of Jerusalem. I am sure you will want to respond as the Lord prompts you. May you be blessed and encouraged as we celebrate the Lord's bursting forth from the tomb in these strange and unique circumstances.
Rev. Ray Lockhart, CMJ UK President.

Brothers & Sisters,

Greetings from Christ Church, Jerusalem.

Usually, during Lent or on Good Friday, churches and congregations around the world take up offerings for the work of Christ Church in Jerusalem. The offerings we receive underwrite the ministry of our Mercy Fund, which is used by Christ Church throughout the year to relieve suffering of many kinds. This year, this will not happen as so many churches are closed.

Also, at this time of year Paul and Janey Hames of CMJ UK with a group of volunteers called "Team GB" would be flying to Jerusalem to host the Spring Fair at Christ Church and raise more than £5,000 for the Mercy Fund. Again, this will not be happening in 2020.

Here in Jerusalem, as around the globe, the news is filled with disease and death. Stockbrokers, doctors and governments are all in retreat before its silent, invisible advance. Israelis, like Americans, are fearful and anxious, anticipating the worst. The word coronavirus is acquiring an ominous meaning, much like the pestilence referred to more than forty times by the ancient prophets in the scriptures.

It was pestilence – two plagues – that swept through Rome in the 2nd and 3rd centuries that motivated Christians to serve each other and their neighbors rather than flee the cities. All were courageous; some died. Each plague lasted fifteen years. By the time they were finished, Rome had become Christian. Their hope and loving perseverance changed the hearts and minds of an entire culture about Jesus and his Father.

Likewise, novel coronavirus gives us a great opportunity to demonstrate compassion, hope and trust in our Messiah. This is a time to comfort. A time to help. A time to bear witness to eternal hope for those finally reckoning seriously with their mortality.

On March 13th, a season of national quarantine began in Israel. Thousands are already losing their jobs. From past experience in wartime, we know people on the margins will begin coming to CMJ for help. Our generous spirit is well known, and the work of the Mercy Fund is part of our witness.

We are planning now to meet the wave of need rolling toward us. Our guesthouse will be empty of pilgrims – most have already departed. We began food distribution last Sunday; it is just a start. The bite of unemployment hasn't yet been felt. Please pray for our ability to keep responding. We will do this in the name of Jesus. He will be exalted among the Jewish – and Muslim – residents of this Land.

We know, of course, that many of you are beset with similar challenges as the fear and disease spread globally. At Christ Church we now meet daily to pray for our needs and yours, asking the Lord to grant us all strength for the challenges just ahead.



It is our hope, that despite your own need, like the Apostle Paul's Macedonian disciples of Romans 15, you will be able to share with those suffering in Jerusalem. The help you send will bless those who are hungry and fearful here in Jerusalem. And it will lift the banner of hope which is the coat of arms of the Kingdom of the Messiah.

We are especially grateful to all of you who give year after year and welcome all who will join us this year. Please pray. If you are able to give, please do so through our sister branch in (country).



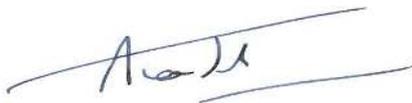
Faithfully in Messiah Jesus,
Director, CMJ Israel

<p>Contributions can be sent by cheque payable to CMJ UK with "Christ Church-Jerusalem" on the back of the cheque. Or contribute by bank transfer to: Sort code 16-00-15 Account 23111430 Ref Christ Church-Jerusalem</p>	<p>Post to: CMJ UK Eagle Lodge Hexgreave Hall Business Park Farnsfield Nottinghamshire NG22 8LS</p>
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As CEO of CMJ UK I am very pleased to endorse this appeal by my Israel colleague Daryl Fenton, and also to affirm the encouraging words of the CMJ President Ray Lockhart. These are indeed as Ray states 'strange and unique circumstances' but also this is a time for acts of generosity and solidarity to those in great need. Contributing to the Mercy Fund is a well proven and faithful way of doing this.

Shalom,



Rev Alex Jacob
CEO CMJ UK

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