

„Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies!“

A LETTER FROM CHRISTOPH OBERMEIER

„When I read the program of the Israel trip I had registered for, in October 2001, to me the event that sounded most boring: „Meeting with Holocaust survivors!“ It was not, that this whole matter did not touch me, or that I was ignorant of it, or that I didn't care what had happened in the past, but it was because I could not relate to elderly people - until then!

Up until that point in my life, the Holocaust survivors were just a group of people I knew nothing about. Somehow it seemed that my whole education and my knowledge had stopped at that point, when the Allied Forces had liberated Europe from Nazi-Germany.

And that is, how we came as a group of young adults from Germany to the Ner Yaakov home, so we could meet the Holocaust survivors, to listen to their stories and to fellowship with them.

Gen. 22:17



Tabea

Sima and Christoph

With my best inner-efforts to go with a positive attitude into that afternoon meeting, I found myself still sceptical. As I mentioned above, I had no connecting point with elderly people and in addition to that, I was meeting people from a generation who survived the biggest Genocide mankind has ever seen, - executed by my country and people! At the entrance I got my first surprise - a positive surprise! An elderly man who lives in that home stood at the gate and welcomed us. I learned that he had already waited for quite a while, just to greet us. Inside sat several elderly Israelis waiting for us and without exception, everybody welcomed us warmly. About five or six shared their life's stories. I do not want to elevate one story over the other, because every testimony is really a miracle in itself.

What is very important for me to mention, is, that not one of these survivors who shared said even one bad, harsh word to us or about Germany. One of them went even so far, as not to blame the German people at all for the mass-killings, but to blame alone the SS.

That visit became for me personally very valuable and has changed a lot in my life. I am 24-years old, and I had for the most part everything but a good childhood or time as a teenager. Only my mother is a believing Christian, but my father is..... an alcoholic. For a very long time I could not forgive him—not because I did not want to forgive him—I just could not! I always had to think about, how much hardship and pain he had caused his family.

However, after the meeting with the Holocaust victims something has changed in me, and the heavy burden of „Not being able to forgive,“ broke away. Off and on I still find it difficult, but in the meantime I reached a point that I can forgive my father. The example of forgiveness and reconciliation, which these survivors are not only talking about, but truly live—that they have really forgiven 'us' - that has changed something fundamentally in myself.

Forgiveness heals and brings joy of life, and this is what I have experienced ever since. The acceptance these elderly people extended toward me has helped me to accept people in my surroundings, which before, I felt they „are not good enough“ or something similar. I was truly accepted by people, whom my forefathers had robbed and killed their closest and dearest persons in their lives. And I also could always see clearer, that I sometimes reject people who have done nothing wrong against me, - they are only different.

Personally I never want to miss these visits! They have been for my personal life probably one of the events, which has brought me further in growing, as an individual person and as a believer.“

THE PRINCESS IN NER YAAKOV

„Thanks be to God, just in the right timing he has sent us a wonderful young German volunteer for a few weeks to help. She is such a blessing to us all and has a real heart to serve. „Johanna,“ I said one day to her, „would you please write for me your full name, as it is in your passport for the bank?“ On a small piece of scratch paper she wrote: Johanna Princess Reuss. „Princess, I said to her, what a wonderful name they gave you. The name really suits you!“ I said a bit astonished! This „Princess-Name“ however did not leave my thoughts. „I never knew anyone with such a name,“ I marvelled. Later Johanna explained to me: „Inge, it is not a name, - it is a title!“ I was a bit embarrassed, but I also could laugh at myself! That is how I found out, that our Lord has sent to us a 'real Princess' to serve the Holocaust survivors. How precious!“

Here are few words from „our“ Princess: „With a grateful heart I can really say, that God has sent me in just the right timing to the right place. I was already in Israel for one month before I came to Ner Yaakov. Again and again I prayed and asked God, what his purpose was for me here in the land? When I was 16-years old I visited Auschwitz. After this experience a deep wish grew in my heart to meet Holocaust victims. I wanted just to be able to talk to them. Now, almost 10 years later I can do just that.... but not only talk to them, - I can laugh with them and cry with them. I am blessed by the love I receive from them and what God does in my life through them!“

Gen. 24:60

Our Brazilian guests together with Johanna and Jolanda

„Our sister, may you increase to thousands!“

