

## MY 25 YEARS JOURNEY WITH HOLOCAUST-SURVIVORS

*"The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it!" 1. Thess. 5:24*



As I prepared this newsletter, I just thought I would share with you a little about my personal walk coming to Israel and giving you a little insight into the past 25-years of working with the Holocaust survivors. Hard to believe, this spring it is 25-years ago since all this work began.

However, as I started to write, I realized that this is a much harder task than I thought. The Lord guided me and has done many miracles, but even sharing one of them in detail would probably take a whole page in itself. Well, let's try!

*"Come and bring thank offerings to the temple of the Lord." 2. Chron. 29:31*

In January 1983 I had become, truly miraculously, a Christian. "Wherever you go, I shall go, wherever you be, I shall be, your people are my people and your God is my God!" Ruth 1:16. This scripture was given to me for my life, in a time when I knew almost nothing about Israel nor very little of the Holocaust. I received very good teaching about Christian-responsibility toward Israel and God's own heart for His people and His land, which I treasure deeply until today. Not wanting to work as a waitress in a Bavarian restaurant any more, I then ended up—22 years old and only five months since becoming a Bible believer—in Israel, volunteering.

In the first years of my journey I helped at a farm, worked with elderly people and in a nursing home. My time as volunteer at a German doctor's clinic in Haifa, where I was from 1985-1987, became a „hard-school-of life“ for me: learning discipline, obedience, accountability—everything I had never learned as a teenager. Looking back however, I am so grateful for this time, which laid a foundation for the duties and responsibilities for the years to come.

Who would have thought, that the Lord would change my life the day I walked into the room of a patient of Dr. Finger's?

Up until that point I had met some Holocaust survivors, but in my background in Germany, and even now living in Israel for quite a while, I had not understood any of the depth of the terrible history of the German people and horrific sufferings caused to the Jewish people.

Well, that changed from the time I walked into Bella Steiner's room, who had come for treatment to the clinic. Bella, a sole survivor of Auschwitz—not having children and being a widow—invited me to live in her home. A deep friendship has developed—a friendship that has lasted now for 25 years. What a gift!

Living in a home with a survivor opened my understanding, and also my heart. I saw, how 'little daily things' in life could trigger horrible memories. For example, how a simple small incident with the dog of Bella's neighbor triggered terrible pain, as her memory was plagued with pictures how the Nazis had hanged her dog—and here I was, the "German" neighbor!

I have seen a Mauthausen survivor in the nights, not only fighting cancer, but waking up tortured by nightmares. Being able to stay with him and assist him during these long nights, I was made aware of human helplessness in bringing real relief to the deep, inner pain.

Some of these experiences gave me a little glimpse into the sufferings of the Holocaust victims, but also understanding and a deep inner conviction why God had brought me to Israel in the first place.

I wanted to do something! Never having been sent out by a Church and not having resources of my own, - all I had was my willingness and my two hands!

Bella did not want to stay alone and so offered me a place to live with her. Until today I am touched, that Bella had offered to sponsor me, so I could start to volunteer and help the sick and needy. An Auschwitz survivor would support me, so I could volunteer! "The Lord's thoughts are not our thoughts and His ways are higher than ours!" Isaiah 55:8—These were the beginnings: starting to bring survivors to hospital, assisting them with simple nursing tasks, going shopping, cleaning their homes and building God-given relationships! Then there was a short break for studying practical-nursing.

*"Know therefore that the Lord your God is God; he is the faithful God!" Deut. 7:9a*



Photo above: 1. Bella 2. Sara Ehrenhalt who survived Auschwitz together with Bella  
3. Nunik Spatz and wife. Nunik survived the Holocaust on 'Schindlers List'  
4. Myself end 1980's. Photo below: More recent photo together with Bella in Jerusalem

