**Standing Together: An Update from our Rockwood Summer Camps**

**Courageous Love**

**In the love of Jesus, Shown on behalf of the Palestinian Women**

This was a day when the Fellowship of Christ joined not just one, but two women's groups as they met in Nazareth, in the West Bank right next to the sides of the women’s prayer meeting of Palestinian and Israeli women which began a few weeks earlier. Over the past few weeks, the two groups, which are comprised of Palestinian and Israeli Musalaha women, have been planning and preparing for this meeting, focusing their attention on an evening of prayer where both groups could meet and pray together. The atmosphere was electric as the women entered the room, and the energy was contagious as they began to sing songs of praise and worship to the Lord.

In the midst of their prayer, a Palestinian woman spoke up, saying, “We come to you in prayer with a heavy heart, knowing that our land is in turmoil and conflict.” She then went on to share how the women in her community were facing challenges on a daily basis, and how they were struggling to maintain their faith in the midst of chaos. She continued, “But we know that we are not alone, and that God is with us always.”

**Musalaha**

As believers, we have the power and ability to love God and others fearlessly. On a day that most groups would be cancelling meetings in the face of violence, the women at this meeting courageously met together. In In Haifa, Netanya and Nazareth, several women gathered at various locations in courageous fellowship during the escalating violence between the two sides. The two groups, which are comprised of Palestinian and Israeli women, wrote supportive scriptures to one another, and embraced her with courage. They broke for a meal together, and then continued their time of prayer.

**God in the midst of Chaos, the Message of Habakkuk**

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In a hot summer day in July, children gather in the concrete playground of Mihlath, in Ashkelon. Not only are they looking forward to a fun-filled camp but they are also preparing for the goodbyes for the children as separation might come at any time. They are playing the final game of tag and basketball. They are also inside the crowded bus, full of children, off to summer camp. The time was ripe for the hundreds of balloons being filled with water behind the scenes for the fun that was about to begin.

Suddenly, at full camp, the children were all present and all the parents left. It was as if the chaos of bruises and shattered the joy and gaiety out of every child’s heart and body. Children were sent off to their destinations. As they made their way toward the gates, they turned their faces and bid their parents a final goodbye. This was the end of summer camp.

Summer Camp: Beit Sahour Camp

It was a privilege to bring some of the people from our church over to work with the children at this camp. It was an incredible experience to see how the children were able to stand up to the challenges in front of us. Our counselors, lead by a Palestinian lawyer, taught them how to work together and to make decisions as a team.

By Shadia Qubti

Camp is a wonderful opportunity for children to let their hair down and enjoy the sunshine. They get to make new friends and have fun. It’s a time when they can simply be kids. They could laugh, run, play, dance and enjoy life. The camp is set up in a single room where I saw tears, but it was also a place where I heard laughter and joy.

By Kaitlyn Barnhill

The camp cannot happen without children or counselors. I may be willing to overcome my fear when our leaders allow it. On the other hand, if our leaders do not allow it, I will not be able to control my fear. This is a loud and clear message.

We acknowledge and appreciate the parents and the community where Israeli and Palestinian parents and counselors work together de-radicalizing, changing hearts and minds, and when we sang ‘We are weak’ and ‘Me,’ and when we sang ‘Jesus Loves a single room where I saw tears, but it was also a place where I heard laughter and joy.

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