



Himmelsperlen  
International e.V.



Opening service at Emmanuel Church

**Do not fear, for I am with you;  
Do not anxiously look about  
you, for I am your God. I will  
strengthen you, surely I will help  
you, Surely I will uphold you  
with My righteous right hand.  
For I am the LORD your God,  
who upholds your right hand,  
Who says to you, 'Do not fear,  
I will help you.'**  
Isaiah 41:10, 13



Margret Meier

Dear Friends,

With this invitation, God gives us the right view in this time of so much bad news. Who could encourage us more or give us more confidence than the living God?!

In HIM our life is secure, whatever comes our way. HE is the LORD of life!

In recent weeks I have received **emergency calls** from Pakistan, Syria and Lebanon. Gradually the shortage of food is a growing concern. In all three countries in which we have our projects, the fear of the spreading crisis is huge. Many jobs have been stopped, curfews are required, and an economic crisis is developing so quickly. On the streets people are begging for bread daily.

While writing this letter, the first food parcels are being distributed to the slaves by our partners in Pakistan. They receive rice, lentils, flour, oil, salt, pepper and soap. We're so thankful to be able to help them in their time of need.



Distribution of food parcels



Pray for bread



Distribution of food parcels



Emergency relief



Distribution of food parcels

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## SYRIA



Alkalima Center



Trauma therapy



Hair styling course



Reception



Training for mothers



Instruction

**The Alkalima Center for Health and Development in Damascus** is a project of the Alkalima church and is funded by Himmelsperlen. I was there for the first time at the end of January in order to see the ministry for myself. Pastor Rami explained to me that from Monday-Friday, the four rooms are optimally used for different ministries. In 100 square meters a lot of good can take place. Three trauma therapists work mostly with children and teenagers. A psychologist is offering a course for mothers whose children are all the same age. At the end of the hour, one of the 10 participants, Fatimah, came to me and asked me to thank Himmelsperlen for making this center possible and for financing it. She studied educational science, has a 9-year old daughter and says, "What I'm learning here is much better than all that I learned at the university. The value of the education here is based on the biblical view of man." She beamed at me with thankful eyes. This statement shows me clearly how important and valuable the ministry is here.

**Hamsi, a hairdresser**, trains unemployed women with a 12-week course in hairdressing. A music teacher has a group of 10 students. **A math teacher** teaches students gifted in math skills in order to prepare them for the final exams so that they can continue studying. Because of the war, opportunities are few. Schools were destroyed, teachers fled the country. The children have many deficits.

There's a lot of activity **at the front desk**. A steady stream of people from this part of the city come and want to register their children. **Those seeking advice are heard.** On Saturdays about 100 children come to the children's hour at the church. Almost all of them are from Muslim or Druze families. The parents trust the church workers; 7 of them also work at the center. In the Alkalima Center I see a model for many other centers in Syria. People are very open. They've lost so much. Here they receive attention, help and love. It is a place of living hope.

Ministry in churches in Damascus is on my schedule. We drive to **Swaida**, a somewhat distant city. A church plant is to start there. The 10-year old church is in the starting blocks, ready to plant a daughter church. Their motor: love for God and their neighbor. I find well-readied conditions. The expectation on God is huge, and everywhere I am asked to pray for people directly. God is at work. This is a special time for Syria right after the war.



Mortar grenades in front of the church



Bullet holes



Ruined church



Destruction of Damascus



Destruction of Damascus



Former school

## PAKISTAN

It's teeming with people in front of the school as we arrive in February with guests. In joyful expectation the students and teachers prepared for our visit. We were greeted with flower necklaces, balloons, drums and dance. The cultural reception gave the Pakistanis great joy; they were in their element. The school is 3 years old. The school year is over in March, then report cards and summer vacation follow. On April 1st 50 new students will be accepted. But because of the corona virus, school begin must be postponed until the government gives a green light for the school to open.

**Included in this trip are conferences for women, leadership training, and instruction for the parents of our students.** The theme for the 2 **women's conferences** – with all together ca. 400 women – is : Faith is relationship to Jesus. It's great to see such open, interested faces and to sense the inner hunger these women have. At the end, many come forward for personal prayer. For the first time we've invited people to a leadership training and are excited to see who will attend. Principals, many teachers from various schools, pastors, youth leaders, children's church workers and others will attend. It's obvious that these people need training. And we will continue to offer it. When we visit the brick fields near the brick huts we talk to the parents of the students about the importance of education and their children's perspective future. But we also talk about hygiene and healthy nutrition. Most of these people are illiterate.

**A highlight: the opening service of the new Emmanuel Church.** For the start of this church, in October 2019 we appointed an older teacher, Salamat Ghauri, as the pastor. Since then a growing group meets for church on Sundays when it's not raining. Everyone sits on the ground, today as well. But this Sunday a tent covering is stretched over the rugs and dusty earth. A worship team from Pakistan with drums and traditional instruments inspire everyone. Praise to God is raised from thankful and joyful hearts. We are moved to see what God is obviously doing among the people here. **I preach about Jesus as the Bread of Life, who satisfies our hearts' hunger.** The lame and sick wait patiently until we have time to pray for them. Lunch is prepared for everyone: curry chicken with rice, a feast. **Our dream is that the Emmanuel Church could build a simple house** where they could hold church services and have a place to meet in community. For these people who live outside of the city and society, there is not one room where they can meet during the cold weather.

**We paid Gulam's ransom** so that he and **his lame wife, Azra, and their three children** could find a better home. In the meantime they have moved and are so happy about their new house and their new freedom.



Welcome while visiting the school



Women's conference



Women's conference



Training of parents



Training of parents



Emmanuel Church



The Gulam family



Children on the brick fields

## LEBANON

**The planned medical mission in March had to be cancelled.** On March 28, the day we were to travel, the borders were already closed. Meanwhile the church's medical service to the Syrian refugees was also cancelled for security reasons. The pastor and some church coworkers wearing protective clothing very carefully take food parcels to the refugee camps. As long as the medicine lasts it will be distributed to the very sick. There are no doctors. The fear that the corona virus could be brought into the camp is very great. The virus would spread there so quickly! Since this crisis began, the resources are scarce. This country is in a huge economic crisis and very much in debt. **We want to help now financially so that food parcels and medicine can continue to be given to the refugees.**

## NEWS

It's unclear as to when the cancelled medical mission will be rescheduled.

We also had to cancel our **Friendship Day**. If and when we find a new date for this is also unclear.

A change occurred in the office. Monika Mann had to leave, and **Sandra Dümmer** replaced her for this time.

**I wish you all strength and health in this crisis time.**

**With heartfelt greetings**

*Margret Meier*



City of Zahle



Refugee camp



Refugee camp



Syrian refugees at home

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Gifts are tax-deductible.

**Donation receipts will be sent automatically at the beginning of the year.**

### MANAGER / CHAIRWOMAN



Margret Meier

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