

Faced With 'Certain Death,' Only the Supernatural Could Save This Evangelist

Jürgen Bühler works for the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem. The organization has had two dominant goals: first, to serve as a conduit of comfort and blessing through which believers in the nations could show their love and support to Israel.

Second, the ICEJ stands as a prophetic voice to this generation concerning God's unwavering plan to fulfill His covenant promises to the fathers of Israel. Namely, that He would ultimately restore the children of Israel to their rightful land and sequentially to a right relationship with their God, the God of Israel.

Recently, Bühler was diagnosed with advanced kidney cancer with a 50 percent survival rate, lower if he chose to have the tumor removed.

Faced with an impossible decision, Bühler and his family and friends turned to God. Below is his incredible testimony, which originally appeared in the ICEJ newsletter.

In late November, I found myself at Shaarei Zedek Hospital in Jerusalem for what I thought were routine tests. A few days later, the doctor gave my wife, Vesna, and me the results: The diagnosis was advanced kidney cancer, with a mass growing out from the kidney into the main vein, winding "like a snake" towards my heart. "The good news is," said the doctor, "that it is operable." However, he immediately advised we seek a hospital abroad, as very few Israeli doctors had the experience to treat such a rare and severe case.

My chance of survival, in his estimation, was 50 percent, and

even lower for a successful removal of the cancerous growth, as it had spread inside my abdomen. The serious expression on his face showed he did not have much hope for me.

For my family and I, that November morning changed everything. We had just celebrated a blessed and successful Feast of Tabernacles, and I was busy preparing for a symposium at the European Parliament in December. As a family, we anticipated welcoming home our son at Christmas during a break from his studies in Germany. In January, Vesna and I were scheduled to attend the Global Prayer Quake in Nigeria, and later that month, we anticipated over 150 pastors to join us at Envision, the ICEJ Pastors and Leaders Conference in Jerusalem.

But, in one moment, everything stopped. All these plans came crashing down, and the fervent pace of our lives was brought to a painful and grinding halt. In the hospital, Vesna and I cried together, and arriving home a few days later, I felt completely devastated. I clearly recall sitting on our sofa, watching our children, and thinking: "This could be my last few months with my family."

Realizing my only hope was for Jesus to heal me, I asked my friend and ICEJ's International Director to mobilize our prayer network. While doctors repeatedly referred to this cancerous "snake" in my body, we held on to our hope in Jesus. Both Vesna and I understood it was a spiritual problem requiring a spiritual solution.

On my first morning home from the hospital, something supernatural happened: When I got up that morning, I felt a change in my spirit, but it wasn't just me. To my surprise, each member of our family felt a lifting of their spirit as well. With the flick of a switch, supernatural faith and peace came flooding into our hearts. This peace surpassed our understanding and was in total contradiction to my medical circumstances. Today, we know this was the impact of prayers from our brothers and sisters around the world who carried us.

At that time, I also suggested to Vesna that, for the next two weeks, we should open our home and invite our friends to share communion, pray with us and trust God that this snake would leave my body. Vesna immediately agreed, and for the next few weeks, we hosted the most amazing prayer gatherings. The presence of Jesus was very powerful in those meetings, and everybody who entered our home testified to it.

Both Messianic and Arab pastors from all over Israel traveled to join us in prayer and were of great encouragement to us. Also, the staff and volunteers of the ICEJ were praying and fasting with us, regularly joining us for the evening prayer and communion. I received a word of encouragement that many congregations in Israel and numerous believers around the world carried us in their prayers. Some of the ICEJ branches even initiated 24/7 prayer chains for this cause. The many letters and calls we received throughout that difficult time lifted us up daily.

Something that amazed me in this process was when other people, joining our evening meetings, experienced healing themselves! Yet nothing seemed to be changing in my own body. We felt overcome by God's supernatural peace, but my physical state remained unchanged. The follow-up scans only confirmed the initial, hopeless diagnosis.

In the midst of it, I learned to thank the Lord daily for the amazing wife He has given me. Time and time again, Vesna proved to be a rock that stood firm in this stormy situation. Like a general, she was full of unwavering hope for victory and encouraged the entire family.

Additionally, our children were blessed to be a part of the believing community in Jerusalem, which gave them much strength. The private school our two youngest children attend organized daily prayer for our family with the entire student body. Some teachers fasted for us and visited with us for prayer as well. Our sons attended a weekly prayer watch at

Succat Hallel, a local prayer house. Many times they would return home having received affirmation from the Lord that their daddy would be healed. Our oldest son had similar experiences at his Bible school in Germany.

Another great blessing to us was our home congregation. The entire community covered us in prayer, love and support. Throughout the entire journey, they kept the faith and prayed with us for a supernatural healing that would make the highly invasive and dangerous operation unnecessary. The prayers and visits of many Jewish friends and partners were a great encouragement as well. Some even shared special prayer meetings in their synagogues.

For me personally, this difficult season became a time of reviewing my life. Since the doctors felt my chances for survival were very limited, I began to look at my family, ministry and my own life with new eyes. God challenged me to look at many areas of my life from a new perspective. Although I wouldn't have chosen this trial for myself, today I am very thankful to God for this time. I became more thankful and appreciative of the body of Christ, both here in Israel and around the world, as I got to experience firsthand how much we need each other.

In late December, we found the right surgeon to perform my operation in Germany. Good family friends from the German region of Saxony recommended a doctor in Dresden, a world expert in his field. To our relief, he agreed to perform the operation. The date was set for the end of January, so in the meantime, we continued to pray and to gather in our home.

Upon our arrival in Dresden, Germany, we requested one final ultrasound—still believing for a miracle. The results, however, were very sobering. “Much of your abdomen is unrecognizable,” said the doctor. “Everything is full of cancer.” The next morning, I was brought to the operating room. The surgery took much longer than planned. Vesna called

again and again to talk to the doctor, only to receive the same response: "They are still operating." Finally, she was asked to come.

"Come sit down in my office," a doctor said welcoming her. "There were complications. Your husband lost a lot of blood, so we had to put him in an induced coma, which could last a few days." Vesna learned I received 25 units of blood, and the specialist told her it was one of the most complex operations he had ever done. Nevertheless, to everyone's surprise, I woke up the very next morning, though still in a life-threatening condition.

One of the great lessons I took from that particular time was that the gospel of Jesus Christ is the power of salvation. After two months of facing almost certain death and being in critical condition for 24 hours after surgery, I didn't know whether my body would recover. Today, I can say with all confidence that throughout this experience, I didn't fear death. I knew with absolute certainty that heaven was waiting to welcome me. I pleaded with the Lord for healing, because I felt my family needed me and I wanted an opportunity to serve the Lord more fully. But there was no fear of death.

I appreciated this peace even more in the hospital when I shared the recovery room with an elderly man who, also having undergone a serious surgery, cried for help for fear of death. During the night, he called for his World War II comrades to help him, even for the *Sondereinsatzkommando*, a notorious Nazi unit, to get him out. I realized that on our deathbed, our philosophies and beliefs are tested. I came to personally appreciate more than ever there is only one name given to men which can take away the sting of death, and that name is Jesus.

The day after I woke up, a remarkable restoration started to take place. Ten days after the operation, I was permitted to leave the hospital and, just two weeks later, my family and I

were on the airplane back to Israel. In February, I went back to my doctor in Jerusalem, who had first diagnosed me in November.

I will never forget his reaction when he saw me: His mouth dropped open, and a few seconds later a big smile followed. "Jürgen, you are here!" he shouted. I realized he did not expect me to come back. Another doctor told me: "You have been walking for months with an angel of death on your shoulder. But I know that you are people of faith."

God did a miracle! After the first blood test I took in Israel, the doctor said to me: "Jürgen, you have the blood of an 18-year-old."

In April, I resumed my work at the ICEJ, and my latest check-up showed no signs of cancer. God is good. He is our healer. Isaiah 53:4-5 declares that He "bore our sicknesses" (JUB) and that "by His stripes we are healed (HCSB). In Exodus 15:26 (MEV), God declares "I am the Lord who heals you." Literally, it says "I am the Lord your physician."

During my battle with this sickness, we made a decision as a family. We said to Jesus, "You are our family doctor." This means whatever is happening, we will first seek Him in prayer and consult with His expertise. In my case, God referred me to an expert doctor in Germany. Others who joined our prayer gatherings in Jerusalem were healed instantly.

All in all, our lives are in His hands. Whatever your situation is, I want to encourage you to keep the faith—in the Lord and in His promises. He is the same yesterday, today, and forevermore. You might say, "Jürgen, I do not have as many intercessors as you did." The truth is, it takes just a touch of the hem of Jesus' garment to make the difference.

Even a single prayer makes a difference. If you want us to pray with you, I invite you to send us your prayer request, and we will intercede for you at our staff prayer meetings

here in Jerusalem.

I finally want to thank everyone who prayed and stood with us. It was truly humbling to see the outpouring of love and support that we received from so many places around the world. God is a prayer-answering God, and He hears the cry of His children. Thank you for standing with us. I want to extend great thanks to the entire ICEJ family, who stood with us in fasting and prayer. I am blessed to work with each one of you in Jerusalem.

Please continue to pray for us: For continued health and for the empowerment of the Holy Spirit to fulfill all He has called us to do here in Israel and in the nations. {eo}