

Israeli Organization Pays Tribute to African-American Hero

In Jerusalem this week, Heart to Heart sponsored a blood drive in memory of Dr. Charles Drew, the developer of modern techniques that led to the creation of large-scale blood banks.

“Blood transfusions, long-term blood storage and many routine surgeries today would be impossible if not for his pioneering work,” says Jonathan Feldstein, Heart to Heart director. “Israel’s National Blood Center has benefitted from the achievements of Dr. Drew and it’s only befitting on his memorial to honor his legacy of saving lives.”

Drew passed away on April 1, 1950. Drew was the first African-American to earn a Doctor of Medical Science from Columbia University, as well as the first black surgeon to serve as an examiner on the American Board of Surgery. At the outbreak of the Second World War, Drew’s pioneering work revolutionized blood storage and was the foundation for the American Red Cross Blood Bank.

The blood donors were Christians visiting Israel to attend the Jerusalem Assembly in conjunction with Covenant Alliance, the Knesset Christian Allies Caucus, and Ami Tours to bless the nation.

“With nearly 8 million citizens, comprised of many different ethnic and religious groups, the need to increase Israel’s blood supply and keep it safe has never been more critical,” Feldstein says. “We are so appreciative of our Christian brothers and sisters for making it a priority to help save Israeli lives—Jew and non-Jew alike.”

In this special Jerusalem blood drive, the mood was festive and the response from the participants was equally heartwarming.

Virginia Shepherd of Texas sounded a spiritual note, "Giving blood in Israel is the greatest blessing, knowing the need and honoring the greatest nation on earth."

Thomas Lee Johnson of Washington, D.C., was grateful for the opportunity: "Israel is the jewel of democracy and religious freedom in her region and the courageous warriors and civil servants who defend her need our blood to fortify and deepen the benefits she gives to *all* her inhabitants."

New Mexico fire fighter Pete Duran reflected, "I never thought an American could donate blood to save lives in Israel. I pray that a Jewish life is saved by my donation."