

How You Can Help Israel During Tragic Resurgence of COVID-19

We have all watched the COVID-19 pandemic happen in the U.S. and around the world. Israel has been on the hearts and in the prayers of many Christians in recent weeks as we've seen the news about enforced lockdowns after a spike in cases.

Barry Segal, founder of Vision for Israel, has the inside track on what's happening there and how Christians can help. He and I discussed these topics and more on a recent episode of *The Strang Report* podcast.

Barry told me Vision for Israel has "really had an amazing year in terms of what's happened since the outset of the pandemic. The coronavirus plague, as we know it is sometimes called, has not spared Israel. In fact, I believe it has been something that has been shaking our nation. In the political fabric, in the population, people are growing very desperate.

"People are looking for answers," he said. "And so our response as an organization—especially with an emphasis on helping in the natural as well as the spiritual—is to distribute humanitarian aid." Vision for Israel delivers food and other essentials to "the Jewish and Arab populations, to believers, to unbelievers, to Ethiopian immigrants, to Holocaust survivors, the elderly, people who are poor and needy victims of terror attacks," he said.

Barry said that unlike some other ministries, Vision for Israel has continued serving despite the lockdown. In fact, the ministry has grown. "Our team is expanding, and we're distributing deliveries to homes individually, because it's not easy for people to get out presently," he said. "Right now, Israel is under a lockdown restriction throughout the

country because just in the last 24 hours, we've had another 5000 diagnosed cases of the coronavirus."

And the situation there has grown increasingly serious, Barry said. "Already Prime Minister Netanyahu has warned that the hospital emergency wards are going to probably fill with about 1600 people ... we have a small population, and per capita, Israel is now ranking [as] one of the highest countries for the contagion of coronavirus at this time," he said.

Religious and culture traditions in both the Orthodox Jewish and Muslim populations have made it easy for the virus to spread, Barry told me. But another factor also plays a part. "The problem is that you have younger people who are going out defying any restrictions, with demonstrators and protesters coming out once a week," he said. "And they're allowed to protest and demonstrate in Jerusalem, in front of the prime minister's residence, but the rest of the population is supposed to be locked down. So it's almost a mirror image of some of the same issues in the United States."

No matter what, Vision for Israel has a deep commitment to help those in need, Barry said. "What we found is the best way we can help ... is by providing individual food, heavy food baskets that we fill up, we buy from food distributors," he said. "And for the Ethiopian Jewish population, we buy special things that they cook with. And then we're also taking financial vouchers that are prepaid debit cards, which we can help subsidize whatever other needs they have."

Vision for Israel offers aid in a number of additional ways, Barry told me, including buying ambulances, which of course is another great need in Israel right now. This all arises out of the nonprofit's desire to do "all we can to sow the love of God's compassionate heart into the souls in the lives of the Israeli people, whether they be Jewish or Arab, whether they have faith or they don't have faith," he said.

If you'd like to be a part of this spiritual and humanitarian work in Israel, listen to the entire podcast here and be sure to connect with Vision for Israel at or at its toll-free number, 1-866-351-0075. I hope you'll like and share this article and podcast with anyone who has a heart for God's chosen people. {eoa}