

People Are Born To Shine!

A newsletter rooted in the Christian faith created to inspire and support all people, irrespective of nationality, race, and religion.



CHRISTMAS

Christmas Mission 2018

For the ninth consecutive year, the Naji Cherfan Foundation team along with volunteers toured selective hospitals, orphanages and nursing homes in Beirut and Mount Lebanon during the month of December with one important mission—to celebrate the birth of Jesus with those unable to celebrate at home.

The places we visited were filled with Christmas caroling, prayers and hope!

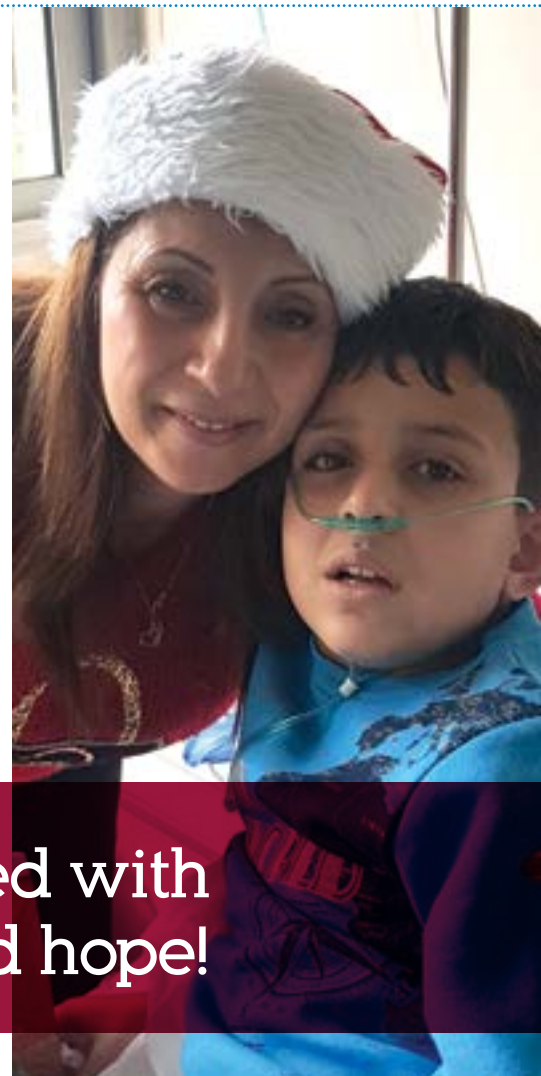
Orphans, elderly, patients and their families, nurses and doctors and medical care teams working during Christmas had the chance to celebrate with cheers, prayers and joy!

The Naji Cherfan Foundation teamed up with Father Roger Cherfan from Parish of Beirut, Father Elie Khalil, and Sister Virginie. All the places we visited were filled with Christmas caroling, prayers and hope! During the visits, prayers, chocolates, sweets and gifts were distributed to every person celebrating Jesus' birth.

"Listening to their stories is a relief to them." said Father Roger.

"It is in giving that I know real happiness." said Rita Abou Jaoude from The Naji Cherfan Foundation team.

"It is an amazing feeling. It is the first time I've had such an experience," said Christelle, a volunteer university student.



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I decided right then and there that I would do whatever I could to make this dapper older gentleman named George happy.

Safety on the World's Roads

A new report by the World Health Organization (WHO) indicates road traffic deaths continue to rise, with an annual 1.35 million fatalities.

How to Stop Deforestation?

If we do not act immediately to curb deforestation, experts estimate that in 30 years, the earth's surface will be left bare...

www.najicherfanfoundation.org

Christmas Mission 2018



SCENES FROM
Christmas Mission 2018

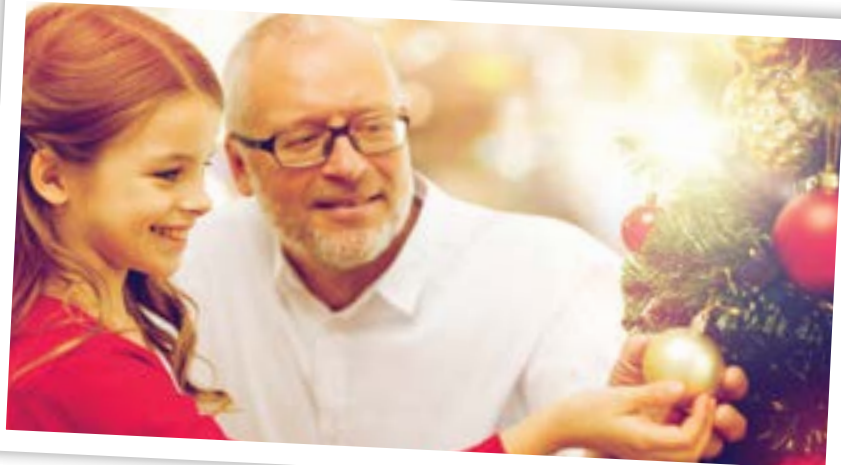
George's Best Friend: A Christmas Story

My mother was a single mom, and I was her only child. We lived in the '60s in the city in a tiny apartment. My Aunt Rose and cousins lived next-door. Every December my mom spread the word to anyone alone on Christmas Eve that she would be having an open house. My mom believed that no one should be alone during the holidays. If she could, she probably would have put an ad in the paper inviting the world.

As it was, our tiny apartment was stuffed. Every room but my bedroom was filled with partying adults on Christmas Eve. Sleep was impossible, but I tried to fall asleep anyway, because Santa would not leave gifts for little girls who were awake (or so I was told). As I lay in bed, I wondered how Santa would even know I was asleep amid all the noise, and how he could sneak in and leave gifts with all those people around. The adults in my life explained this, too. The grown-ups all knew Santa, it seemed. Only children weren't supposed to peek.

Every year at midnight, my mom brought me out to the living room to open the gifts Santa left and then the gifts from friends gathered around. It was a Christmas tradition and quite magical and exciting. I was possibly the luckiest kid in the city.

The Christmas Eve open house tradition continued, even when we moved to the suburbs. I was about 12 years old and in the sixth grade. Our new apartment had manicured lawns, flower beds, and beautiful trees right outside our door. My mom managed the complex so, as part of her salary, we got to live in a lovely, one-bedroom apartment. That first Christmas there, my mom invited anyone she met who she learned would be alone on Christmas Eve—neighbors, co-workers, shop girls, the postman...the list went on.



When I was a freshman in high school, we moved into a two-bedroom apartment in the same complex. It was nice to have my own room. Not long after we moved in, a new neighbor moved in next door. His name was George, and he was an older gentleman. He always nodded a greeting when he saw us. It was around Thanksgiving when we saw him park in his space near ours. We were bringing in groceries, and my mom asked him if he had plans for the holiday. When he said no, that he would spend it alone, my mom mentioned her open house on Christmas Eve.

"Please join us," she said. He was already shaking his head no.

"I won't be good company, I'm afraid," he said. "I lost my wife a few months ago." His eyes filled with tears and he turned away. "Thank you anyway!" he called. He went into his apartment and quietly closed the door.

My heart nearly broke in half when he said that. I decided right then and there that, from that day on, I would do whatever I could to make this dapper older gentleman named George happy. Over the next few months on the way home from school, I would often find a flower or an interesting plant to leave on his doorstep. Once I found the skin shed by a cicada and left that. I don't actually know whether he appreciated the bug skin, but I found it fascinating. I never told George the gifts were from me. I dropped them on his step and then hurried inside to my apartment next door. I found all sorts of things to leave on the way home from school.

When the snow came, I wrote messages on his stoop. "Hi George!" with a smiley face.

I really thought I was being sly. I really didn't think he knew it was me. Then one beautiful Spring day toward the end of the school year, I was

New WHO Report Highlights Insufficient Progress to Tackle Lack of Safety on the World's Roads



A new report by the World Health Organization (WHO) indicates road traffic deaths continue to rise, with an annual 1.35 million fatalities. The WHO Global status report on road safety 2018 highlights that road traffic injuries are now the leading killer of children and young people aged 5-29 years.

“These deaths are an unacceptable price to pay for mobility,” said WHO Director-General, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus. “There is no excuse for inaction. This is a problem with proven solutions. This report is a call for governments and partners to take much greater action to implement these measures.”

The *WHO Global Status Report on Road Safety 2018* documents that despite an increase in the overall number of deaths, the rates of death relative to the size of the world population have stabilized in recent years. This suggests that existing road safety efforts in some middle- and high-income countries have mitigated the situation.

“Road safety is an issue that does not receive anywhere near the attention it deserves—and it really is one of our great opportunities to save lives around the world,” said Michael R. Bloomberg, Founder and CEO of Bloomberg Philanthropies and WHO Global Ambassador for Noncommunicable Diseases and Injuries. “We know which interventions work. Strong policies and enforcement, smart road design, and powerful public awareness campaigns can save millions of lives over the coming decades.”

attributed to better legislation around key risks such as speeding, drinking and driving, and failing to use seatbelts, motorcycle helmets and child restraints; safer infrastructure like sidewalks and dedicated lanes for cyclists and motorcyclists; improved vehicle standards such as those that mandate electronic stability control and advanced braking; and enhanced post-crash care.

The report documents that these measures have contributed to reductions in road traffic deaths in 48 middle- and high-income countries. However, not a single low-income country has demonstrated a reduction in overall deaths, in large part because these measures are lacking.

In fact, the risk of a road traffic death remains three times higher in low-income countries than in high-income countries. The rates are highest in Africa (26.6 per 100,000 population) and lowest in Europe (9.3 per 100,000 population). On the other hand, since the previous edition of the report, three regions of the world have reported a decline in road traffic death rates: Americas, Europe and the Western Pacific.

In the settings where progress has been made, it is largely

Source: who.int

How to Stop Deforestation?



Deforestation has been destroying large portions of the planet's forests for years. One major challenge for governments and environmentalists alike is how to stop deforestation so current environmental conditions will not become worse.

For centuries, people have been cutting down trees and burning down forests. Hundreds of years ago, most of the earth's land surface was covered by forests. In order to construct residential areas and establish villages, people had to remove some forests. As populations grew throughout the years, much more development was needed. Poverty and over population raised concern with governments around the world. People were troubled by how to generate enough money to feed themselves and their children. Agriculture once was the principal source of family income. But people grew impatient.

By the middle of the 20th century, people began to readily embrace industrialization, which was touted as the easy way out of poverty, unemployment and slow production. Sure, development was spurred, jobs were created, new industries emerged. But something had to give. In exchange for the fast budding of factories and different industries, forests were depleted.

Since the industrial revolution, the total forest coverage on earth has drastically lessened. Biodiversity has been affected, and overall climate changes and environmental denudation has been spurred.

Now is the time to slow down or eliminate deforestation. It's doable if people would come together in this one, single initiative.

Stopping deforestation

Environmentalists and forestry advocates have been imploring people and governments to immediately act on the problem regarding continued deforestation practices around the world. The message is this: Deforestation

can be stopped if people become more environmentally conscious. That means, to accelerate efforts in stopping deforestation, initiatives have to be started by you.

The most significant contribution you can make is to help curtail the demand for products that are reliant on deforestation. You can start by advocating for and participating in recycling programs.

Paper is made from trees that come from forests. There are now industries focused on recycling paper where used paper is processed and turned into new paper products. If the practice becomes widespread, the number of trees to be cut down would be reduced.

Governments around the world should also start implementing legislation that would effectively prevent the continued practice of deforestation. Sanctions should be given to violating parties. That way, there would be fewer people and companies engaging in slash and burn practices.

Rainforests and dry forests should be protected by governments. They can

DEFORESTATION continued on page 6

Prayer for Peace

Father God, my heart is filled with chaos and confusion. I feel as if I am drowning in my circumstances and my heart is filled with fear and confusion. I really need the strength and peace that only You can give. Right now, I choose to rest in You. In Jesus' Name I pray, Amen.

~ Mary Southerland.

Prayer Corner

GEORGE continued from page 3

about to leave a wild rose on George's doorstep when the door opened.

"Hello my dear," he said. He smiled. I was embarrassed and startled.

"Hello," I said shyly.

"I know you've been leaving me little notes and gifts," he said. "It means so much to me. I find myself looking forward to these little gifts. You have no idea how much happiness you have given me over the past several months. Would you like to come in?" I hesitated. I didn't know him. Not really. He understood.

"Tell you what. Perhaps you and your mom would like to be my guest for supper sometime. I make very good chili!" We did join him for supper. He was right—he made great chili. And so, our friendship began. George came to the open house that Christmas Eve, though he only stayed a little while. When I got home from school, we sometimes went for walks together. Once in a while, George

treated me to lunch or took both my mom and me to supper when she had the time. When he traveled, he always sent me a postcard and brought me back a little gift. I adored him.

When I was 19-years old and at college, I got a call from

my mom that George was in the hospital. When I went to visit him, a smile lit up his face. "This is my best friend," he said to his brother, Walter, and he introduced us. I could see Walter was surprised by this beautiful title "best friend" given to a teen by his brother. I was honored, but also very worried about my friend.

Walter met me outside the door and gave me the news that broke my heart again. "He doesn't have long. The cancer is everywhere."

After I composed myself, I went back inside to sit with George for a while. There was so much I wanted to say. It was difficult for him to talk. The pain was quite bad. I told him how much he meant to me, how much I loved him. He grabbed my hand. His grasp was weak but warm. "My best," he said again. He smiled and drifted off to sleep. That was the last time I saw him.

The Christmas after he died, there was a knock on our door on Christmas Eve day. It was a bouquet of Christmas flowers and pines, a beautiful display, addressed to my mom and me.

The note read: "Before he died, George asked me to make sure you got this on Christmas Eve. He said your friendship helped him through one of the hardest times of his life. Thank you for being such good friends to my brother. May God Bless you this Christmas, and always. Walter."

Every Christmas Eve, and quite often throughout the year, I look up and say hello to my friend George. My heart is full as I remember this beautiful gift he arranged for us before he said goodnight to the world. Our friendship began simply, with a little gift on a doorstep. It became one of the most defining and beautiful friendships of my life.

Source: dailygood.org Originally published on Kindspring.org

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www.facebook.com/najicherfanfoundation

DEFORESTATION continued from page 5

be declared national properties, so that no businesses can ever touch them. They can also be turned into national parks so the overall state of these forests could be effectively preserved.

Reforestation

Reforestation is the opposite of deforestation. If deforestation can be considered wounding of nature, reforestation is the sought-after healing process. In reforestation, forests are replanted with trees. In just a few years, forests would be very much alive again.

Deforestation—in some cases—can not be avoided, but it can be regulated so that it doesn't create a negative impact to the environment and biodiversity. Deforestation can be significantly slowed down. Trees could be cut at slower rates. For each cut tree, a new one should be replanted.

If people do not act immediately to curb deforestation for good, experts estimate that in 30 years, the earth's surface will be left bare...without forests. Catastrophic changes will be felt through harsh weather conditions, flash floods and landslides.

Help stop deforestation now before it's too late.

Source: https://EzineArticles.com/expert/Nathalie_Fiset/20773 and <http://EzineArticles.com/510045>

The Messenger

I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me.

—Malachi 3:1

“I have a message for you!” A woman working at the conference I was attending handed me a piece of paper, and I wondered if I should be nervous or excited. But when I read, “You have a nephew!” I knew I could rejoice.

Messages can bring good news, bad news, or words that challenge. In the Old Testament, God used His prophets to communicate messages of hope or judgment. But when we look closely, we see that even His words of judgment were intended to lead to repentance, healing, and restoration.

Both types of messages appear in Malachi 3 when the Lord promised to send a messenger who would prepare the way for Him. John the Baptist announced the coming of the true Messenger, Jesus (see Matthew 3:11)—“the messenger of the covenant” (Malachi 3:1) who will fulfill God’s promises. But He will act “like a refiner’s fire or a launderer’s soap” (v. 2), for He will purify those who believe in His word. The Lord sent His word to cleanse His people because of His loving concern for their well-being.

God’s message is one of love, hope, and freedom. He sent His Son to be a messenger who speaks our language—sometimes with messages of correction, but always those of hope. We can trust His message.

Lord Jesus Christ, help me not only to understand Your message but to live it.



Ask the Lord to help you share His good news with others in the new year.

INSIGHT

Malachi, the last book of the Old Testament, was written by a man whose name means “my messenger.” Malachi, believed to be a contemporary of Ezra and Nehemiah, ministered to the Jews who had returned from the Babylonian exile. Although the temple had been rebuilt (Ezra 6:14–15), the temple service and sacrifices were defiled for several reasons: lack of reverence for God, offering of blemished sacrifices (Malachi 1:6–9, 12–14), and willful neglect of the tithe (3:8–9). Worse, the priests were defiled by mixed marriages and marital unfaithfulness (2:1–16). Because the priesthood—which served as “the messenger of the Lord”—failed in their priestly function (2:7–9), Malachi speaks of a future “messenger” who would prepare the way for “the messenger of the covenant” (3:1). Four hundred years later, Jesus identified John the Baptist as that messenger (Matthew 11:9–10; 17:12–13).

—K. T. Sim

Source: odb.org

Will You Further NCF's Work?

The Naji Cherfan Foundation was founded after the passing of the beloved Naji Cherfan. Our main goal is to praise the Lord through community work. The foundation works to improve the quality of life of the poorest of the poor of all ages, both those who are healthy and those with health problems, and those with brain injury of any kind, resulting from accident, stroke, etc, while promoting Christian values.

If you like the work NCF is doing and wish to participate, we invite you to become a member of our Board. The goal is to share our inspiration and activities in your country. Please contact us for more information at +961 (0)4 522221.

info@najicherfanfoundation.org

Quotable!

“Falling down is part of life.
Getting back up is living.”

—Jose N. Harris

How I Remember Najī...

Excerpt from *Virtual Patience*

It was during this time that Najī also decided to concentrate on his health. He quit smoking and began eating more nutritious meals. He had shown this type of determination before when he dieted and worked out at the gym during high school. Now he had a similar target in which the outcome was dependent upon his new-found ability to concentrate and use self-discipline.

Critical and sometimes judgmental, he now realized that judging others results in judgment of oneself. He did everything on his own and felt he accomplished things because he had a stronger sense of self worth. His idea of achievement was based on his internal qualities rather than on external possessions. By allowing his mind to relax in order to concentrate, he created a virtual reality. This reality combined the fact of his disability with the fantasy of his recovery.

“In the past, I always said life has come to an end and it’s over, man. Now I say, life has just begun.”

With great anticipation, Najī made plans to visit Athens during July of 1999. His arrival was full of old friends, old activities and old memories. These memories confused and saddened him. He had dreamed of returning completely normal, but as passionately as he believed this, the facts were cold and hard. He was much better and visibly improved, but he was not the old Najī or even the one he hoped to be. At least, not yet.

He kept a journal during these weeks in Greece, and one day he wrote “I want to be better than the Najī that I once was. If not physically, definitely wiser. I learned so much from this accident. One technique to become almost like before is to focus and

concentrate in order to grow stronger.”

Najī was excited about returning to his life in Athens but his excitement changed steadily into emotional confusion. He had too many conflicts between his past and present reality. People, places and situations from his life before were pressing him and the feelings were overwhelming. He floated between what he remembered he could do and what he could actually do. The trip did not bring him the pleasure, comfort or satisfaction he needed.

During this trip, he wrote in his journal: “In August 1999, I reached about 85% healthier. Forget about it. I’m gonna go all the way. When you do something, do it right. Just do it, just do it. I said to give myself one more year and just watch me. I started to appreciate life, have value for things and finally stopped taking people for granted. I woke up one day and realized that I was put on this earth and saved many times to be part of this world for a reason. In the past, I always said life has come to an end and it’s over, man. Now I say, life has just begun.”

He believed these words, and became a new person. One day he woke up and realized that money is not as important as good health or the value of life. This discovery contrasted with the teenager of before whose belief system revolved around “desire and acquire”. This philosophy gave him mental stability and a new appreciation for people and things around him. His organizational skills improved, and he kept an agenda in which he recorded his daily program.

—From Najī’s book, *Virtual Patience* page 24



People Are Born To Shine!

People are Born To Shine is an electronic newsletter owned by The Najī Cherfan Foundation focusing on spirituality and health. The objective of *People are Born to Shine* is to raise awareness among our readers on health challenges and disease prevention, while inspiring them to live a fuller, more abundant life guided by Christian values. This newsletter is dedicated to people of all ages, those who are healthy and those with health problems and those with brain injury of any kind, resulting from accident, stroke, etc.

The content has been carefully selected from sources considered reliable and accurate to bring you good news of health and spiritual wellbeing... However, The Najī Cherfan Foundation assumes no responsibility for inaccurate information. The NCF would like to recognize the devoted work of its volunteers, mainly Me. Kamal Rahal, Me. Harold Alvarez, Joyce Abou Jaoude, Marleine Nassrany, Dima Rbeiz, Reine Kassis, Nabil Khoury, Roland Khoury, Camille Cherfan, Rémy Kfoury, Michel Eid, and all the field volunteers who are supporting NCF in spreading the words of Jesus through their institutions, churches, hospitals, establishments, etc.

This issue is available in Arabic, English, Greek, Dutch, French, Spanish, Portuguese and German. The NCF management and staff are very grateful for the efforts of the Editors who are volunteering to translate and or edit the Newsletter into several languages namely, Isabelle Boghossian for the Greek language, Cristina Buttler for the Portuguese language, Myriam Salibi for the French language and Rita Abou Jaoudi as Reviewer, Professor Lydia & Ambassador Alejandro Diaz for the Spanish language, Heike Mayer for the German language, Roly Lakeman for the Dutch language, Lina Rizkallah & Rita Abou Jaoude for the Arabic language.

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