

From Jordan with Love

To all my friends,

The Middle East is an amazing region. There is much to see, both in the fields of natural and cultural beauty. Most people are very friendly and open minded about their life and our common future on the planet.

Today I am in Petra, Jordan and made a walk of ten hours to see real marvalous " Ancient Mega Structures" (to quote National Geographic) More than that, I like the human and spiritual moments during the trip.

Our Guide stood with us on top of mount Nebo, where Moses saw Kanaan just before his life was claimed by God. He showed us Bethlehem, Jericho, The Dead Sea and Al Kuds, which is Jerusalem. Then he said: "Whether you are a Jew, a Christian or a Muslim and even if you are an unbeliever, you have to believe in peace. He hesitated and we could see that he was deeply moved by the panorama from that place and the words he had spoken.

We all know that the countries where we travel are not the most democratic countries in the world, to say it with an understatement. The man in the street is very proud on his country and you can hear about the king who did much for the refugees, education and watersupply. I only heard some critical notes on the queen, who travels often to the USA, where she was born. The water problem in this country is nothing less than a shame: the country is named after a river and yet it is one of the five most dry countries in the world. We travelled a long and winding road through a canyon and crossed a dam that keeps the water of a small river from being spoiled into the Dead Sea.

We also travelled in Syria, a country with even more problems in the field of a lack of democratic rights. Our guide told us about the political nature of his country and I think he was a brave man to do so.

In Damascus I walked in the footsteps of Saint Paul, who escaped from the city by means of a basket which hang on a rope over the wall of the city.

The story is remembered in detail in Saint Paul's chapel. Most languages held a metaphor related to the story: "A Damascus Experience," indicating that we can have experiences in life that re-orient ourselves.

My personal Damascus Experience occured in the Great Mosque, where we had a moving hour amidst Muslims from all sects who prayed on what is supposed to be the head of John the Baptist, the forerunner of Isa, Jesus Christ. A great many children ran laughing around the great fountain in the court, while some women in black robes wanted to take pictures from us, which is just the other way round as one would expect.

From a region filled with religion as the Middle East, I will noy give you a minor greeting than: God bless you all!

Tjitte

PS:

Because of the terrible light conditions in the restaurant where I type this mail, I can hardly see the keyboard, so some typing errors may occur.

This mail (unformatted) sent to some 50 people on 29 july 2009 from Petra, Jordan
