



Blog

SWFS March 2014 Mission to Israel: Blog Post Eleven

Posted by Israel Trip on March 24, 2014 with 0 Comments

The primary attraction for both tracks today was the Old City of Jerusalem. Regardless of which was taken, both tracks ended their tours of the Old City at the Western Wall. However, the first (or Introductory) track focused entirely on the Jewish Quarter, while the second (or Alternative) track shifted between the remaining three quarters. As this is our first trip to Israel, we travelled with the former. Considering my experiences as well as what I've heard of the second group, I'm certain that both excursions were equally satisfying.

Due to citywide marathon (where trip participant Steven Mitchell Eick was amongst the runners) we were forced to abandon our buses and walk for the duration of the day. While crossing between the marathon course, several costumed entertainers could be seen cheering on the runners in addition to the crowds. Later, we passed the Byzantine Cardo before spending some time at the Hurva Square, mostly to admire their rather recently rebuilt synagogue.

Although we had already been here for several days, the sheer compact nature of Israel's capitol came as a shock as we passed several landmarks from the day before, all on foot. When we finally reached the Western Wall, Rabbi Hirsch said a few words regarding the spiritual, physical, and sociological ramifications surrounding the archeological masterpiece. Afterward we were given the choice to have time to pray at the wall before or after touring the Western Wall Tunnel. I'm quite glad that I chose to move with the first group as a new level of understanding for the wall and its history, overall providing extra meaning for the site.

For the evening Shabbat service we visited Kehillat Yozma in Modi'in which was founded and is still led by Rabbi Kinnerect Shirion, the first female Rabbi in the state of Israel. Their service was sweet and beautiful. Between the children who expressed their musical talents and Rabbi Shirion's elegant sermon regarding sacrifice, it is clear that the congregation is something special.

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