

The Chosen People



Volume VII, Issue 2 February 2001



Jewish Evangelism in the Big Apple

INSIDE
THIS
ISSUE:

Amazing Grace in New York City • Messiah's Messengers at Work
Tough Talk from the Prophet Amos • Announcing Summer Camp



amazing grace

in New York City

Dear friend of the Jewish people,
Shalom from New York City!

There is a story I have wanted to tell you, but could not until I was certain that the main figure in the story (to whom I will introduce you in a moment) was stable and steady in his walk with the Lord.

The story is about a Hasidic man and his daughter who have come to faith in Jesus as their Messiah. The Hasidic Jews are perhaps the most traditional of all Jewish people.

A few years ago, when I accepted the leadership of our great mission, I asked the Board of Directors if I could return the Executive Offices of Chosen People Ministries back to New York City. This is where we began. This is the city with the largest concentration of Jewish people in the world and this is where your mission to the Jews should have its main center of operations.

The diversity of the Jewish community here is mind-boggling! The New York metropolitan area has almost three million Jewish people. Most are secular, but there are a substantial number of more religious Jews.

There are approximately 300,000 Russian Jewish people in Brooklyn alone. Some say that there are as many as 250,000 Israelis in New

York City. There are also large groups of Syrian Jews and many other smaller groups that call New York home. And we—your mission to the Jewish people—hope to have a ministry to almost every type of Jewish person in this great City.

The Hasidim

If you were to ask me who would be the most difficult to reach, I would respond quickly: “The Hasidim.”

Who are the Hasidic Jews? They are a very closed, close-knit Jewish community and are perhaps the most traditional of all Orthodox Jewish people. There are significant Hasidic populations in Israel, Brooklyn and many other places. The Hasidic community is divided into various sects. The divisions are based on various interpretations of rabbinic law and deeper issues of religious interpretation.

Their religious and social lives revolve around their *Rebbe* (their rabbi, who has considerable authority) and the other Jewish people who are part of their group. Their first language is usually Yiddish. The men dress in black and the women wear long dresses. The Hasidim are a world within a world, with their own schools, businesses and social institutions. Perhaps the

best way for me to help you understand the Hasidim is to recommend one of Chaim Potok's books, *The Chosen*, or to suggest you watch *Fiddler on the Roof*.

Where I live in Brooklyn, I encounter Hasidic Jewish people on a regular basis. There are probably more Hasidim in Brooklyn than in any other place in the world, which is one of the reasons Zhava and I chose to settle here. It is an important part of our evangelistic calling.

The Hasidim are some of the most unlikely people to accept Jesus as their Messiah. However, in the early days of Chosen People Ministries, when we were still called the *American Board of Missions to the Jews*, there were a number of Hasidic Jewish people who came to faith...especially when Rabbi Leopold Cohn began our mission back in 1894.

Today, it is very unusual to meet a Hasidic person who has become a believer in Jesus. This is why what happened is so amazing.

“The Jew Requires a Sign”

Samuel* was raised in a Hasidic home and owns a small business in a Hasidic neighborhood in Brooklyn. A few years ago, he was traveling on a plane and sat near a group of Christian young people. They began sharing their faith with him,

although most of the kids had no idea who this man was and what his beliefs really were. Perhaps if they had, they would have been too intimidated to share their faith!

But Samuel was fascinated by the knowledge the young people had about the Old Testament. They told him that Jesus was Jewish and that He was the promised Messiah of Israel. Not only had Samuel never heard this before, but he had never even had a religious discussion with a non-Jew up until that time! He came away from the conversation impressed by the dedication and testimony of the young people and curious about Jesus and Christianity.

They suggested he read the New Testament, but he did not know where to get one and especially where to get one in Yiddish, which was his first language, or in Hebrew.

One day, Samuel was driving down Ocean Parkway in Brooklyn and saw a sign (about 8 feet by 4 feet!) in front of the Chosen People Ministries office that offered, in Hebrew, "Free New Testaments."

I have to chuckle when I remember the Apostle Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 1:22 - "*For the Jew requires a sign...*" This might not exactly be the "sign" the Apostle had in mind, but in this instance it certainly proved to be true. Here's what happened...

Samuel went home and called our office. The missionary who answered the phone knew immediately from his Yiddish accent that the man calling was Hasidic. Occasionally, we receive hostile phone calls from Hasidim and others, but our worker sensed that this man was sincere.

Samuel arranged to come by and get a New Testament!

For some time afterwards, Samuel would call our office and have

lengthy and sometimes heated discussions with our staff. Finally, he requested that our workers meet with him. He had been reading the Yiddish New Testament and had a number of questions.

Over time, he began to share more about himself, especially his burden for his daughter, who lived overseas with her mother and stepfather.

One day, two of our workers met with Samuel at his shop and he asked one of the staff to tell him her "story." Samuel seemed to be getting closer and closer to accepting the Lord.

When Samuel's daughter, Hannah,* came to Brooklyn to visit her father, our staff met with her occasionally over two years. As a result, Hannah accepted the Lord!

We prayed each day for Samuel to say yes to Yeshua. The discussion and dialogue with Samuel continued every week. Finally it happened! One day, to our great delight and surprise, Samuel called our office to tell us that he had made the decision to receive Yeshua as his Messiah. This was almost two years ago and Samuel has not looked back! I have wanted to tell his story all this time, but I needed to be sure that Samuel was sincere and grounded in his walk with the Lord.

Pray for both of these dear people. Samuel is growing, but Hannah is struggling with her faith. She cannot have a New Testament with her nor can she have anything that even remotely resembles Christian thought and teaching. Since the Hasidim are such a close

"I have wanted to tell his story all this time, but I needed to be sure that Samuel was sincere..."

community, everyone knows everyone else. She must be very careful or she could experience severe consequences.

Handpicked Fruit

Day by day, week by week, I am confident that God will bring fruit through our labor. Whether the harvest is in New York City, the former Soviet Union, Latin America or Israel, this handpicked fruit is precious to God.

If a Hasidic man can come to faith in Jesus, it gives me the faith to believe that many others, from every walk of Jewish life, can come to Him as well. We have a powerful and faithful God!

I look forward to a harvest—especially in New York City. We continue to see many Russian Jewish people and others receive the Lord on a regular basis. Yet my prayer and hope is for an even greater harvest as we look forward to the return of the Lord.

I hope you enjoy this newsletter about Jewish evangelism in New York City. I also hope you will pray for us and do what you can to partner with us in reaching God's ancient people with the Good News of Jesus.

Your brother in
the Messiah,


Mitch



*names have been changed

The Eyes Cannot Lie

Klaudia's Israeli neighbor, Zvi,* wanted to know why she believed in Jesus. While visiting in her home, Zvi noticed a picture of Klaudia's son, Greg, who is the pastor of a Messianic congregation. He asked, "Is that your son?" Klaudia then showed Zvi a picture of Greg before he was a believer.

Zvi looked at the picture and was shocked by the difference in Greg's expression.

Klaudia asked Zvi to take a good look at Greg's eyes. She said that when Yeshua comes into our lives, He changes us completely.

Recently, Zvi sent a message to Klaudia. It was this: "Jesus is the Messiah."

New York City: Messiah's Messengers at Work

Walk down any street in New York City. The chances are that eventually you will find an open manhole with a sign posted that proclaims, "Men at Work." Although workers in Chosen People Ministries don't wear hard-hats (although maybe we should in some neighborhoods), our signs might well proclaim "Messiah's Messengers at Work." For New York City is indeed a work in progress for Chosen People Ministries.

Russian Ministries on the Move

One of the most fruitful corners of the concrete harvest field of New York City has been the growing Russian community. As their population in New York has increased, our ministry to the Jewish people of the former Soviet Union has kept pace.

Evangelism continues to be the number one priority. Street evangelism is constantly taking place, with follow-up and home visits with those who express interest. Those with whom we keep contact sometimes go on to visit Messianic congregations, where they continue to receive ministry.

One encouraging sign that holds great promise has been the growth of the Chosen People Ministries home-based Bible studies and fellowship groups that have been springing up in various Russian neighborhoods in Brooklyn and in Queens. These settings allow seekers to ask questions and they also provide an environment for believers to be disciplined and to grow.

RCLC Outreach and Service

Another visible expression of Gospel outreach is the Russian Community Life Center located in the heart of the Jewish community in Brooklyn. This vibrant hive of activity offers a combination of Scripture-oriented ministries



such as Bible studies and prayer groups and other forms of practical help, including English classes and food and clothing assistance.

Chosen People Ministries' Klaudia Z., who has been involved with the Center since its inception, recently commented, "I see people stopping all the time to read the signs in Russian proclaiming that Yeshua is the 'Light of the World.' We have our English classes and we preach the Gospel to the people. We pray together after the Bible classes. They pray and put their hope in Jesus."

Doug P.: Messiah's Man on Campus

Although ministry to the Russian Jewish immigrants is a vital aspect of Chosen People Ministries' work in New York City, it is by no means all of it.

Another important emphasis is reaching Jewish college students.

Outreach worker Doug P. spearheads our campus outreach at Brooklyn College, Columbia and New York Universities. He recently commented, "It is exciting because Jewish students are looking at prophecies about Jesus in their 'own' Bible! Some have returned for further discussion about Jesus as Messiah. One day at NYU, we had three Jewish students give exactly the same reply after reading Isaiah 53: 'Sounds like Jesus to me!' It was so wonderful to share with each of these students in the ensuing discussions!"

Since September, Doug and his co-worker Raakel have distributed hundreds of Messianic flyers and have placed ads in university newspapers advertising our evangelistic website, www.gotmessiah.com.



The Power of the Gospel

Here is a mystery. How does a tract, written in Hebrew, find its way into hospital furniture that has never been used?

Ben,* an Orthodox Jewish man, was fighting for his life after being struck by a car. Surgeons had to remove both legs. During his recovery, he was moved to a new wing of the hospital—so new that the furniture was still wrapped in plastic.

Ben opened the drawer of an end table, and in it, he found a tract written in Hebrew. He read it and received Yeshua as his Messiah.

Our workers now meet with Ben regularly.

Lauren B.: Magnet for the Lord

Since moving to New York City late last year with her husband and collaborator, Jay, Lauren B. has continued to use the gift God has given her as an evangelist to the Jewish people. Her compelling witness and vibrant personality have enabled her to form relationships and share the Gospel with the particularly difficult-to-reach Orthodox Jewish community.

Recently, the Lord opened up an opportunity for ministry to Rachel,* a young Israeli woman. One night, shortly before she returned home to Israel, Rachel joined Lauren at a gathering of friends at a kosher restaurant. She asked many questions about Jesus as they read the Messianic passages from the Hebrew Scriptures together. Other Orthodox Jewish diners entered the discussion and were intrigued with Lauren's testimony and point of view. After two more days of fellowship and fruitful discussion, Rachel returned to her homeland with prayers, blessings and a lot to think about.

Not long after, a woman who teaches at a Jewish school contacted Lauren because the children in her classes were asking her why Jesus is NOT the

Jewish Messiah! Lauren has followed up with this relationship and they plan to speak together on a regular basis. Lauren recently shared, "My prayer is that she will soon be teaching those precious children the truth that Jesus is their Messiah."

New York City: Opportunities Abound

Opportunities for ministry abound in New York City. It seems safe to say that so long as the prayerful, painstaking work of sharing the Gospel with the Jewish people continues, it will go forward in New York City. As Boris Goldin, New York branch director, says, "It is truly the epicenter of Jewish evangelism."

If you are interested in learning about the wide range of short- or long-term opportunities for Jewish evangelism in New York City, give us a call at 1-212-223-2252. We'd love to talk about it with you!

Our New York City Staff



See the Through Jewish Eyes Bible

by Dr. Daniel Goldberg



Tough Talk From The Prophet Amos

Bible commentators through the centuries have been intrigued by the orderly presentation of the prophet Amos' oracles* of judgment.

Amos may have been a peasant, but he was by no means poorly educated. In fact, Amos gives us one of the most colorful books of the Old Testament and his command of language is unequalled.

The Sins of the Nations

The bulk of Amos' judgments unfold in an orderly presentation of repetitive phrases and clauses. Let's examine the language of this prophet's messages of judgment upon Israel, Judah and her Gentile neighbors. The phrase "For three transgressions...and for four" appears eight times in the first two chapters of Amos. The repeated use of this phrase indicates that the measure of iniquity is full and the Lord's wrath must fall upon the wicked.

Amos first pronounces judgment upon all of Israel's surrounding

enemies. His audience in both Israel and Judah would receive his message with gladness. Just consider: Damascus ravished the Israelite city of Gilead (1:3), Philistia sold God's people into slavery (1:6), Tyre broke a treaty with Israel (1:9), Edom hounded Israel with the sword (1:11), Ammon violated the pregnant women of Gilead (1:13) and Moab desecrated the tombs of the dead (2:1). For these and other sins against God's people, "the LORD roars from Zion" (1:2) and like a lion will devour these nations of prey.

The Sins of Israel

But Amos doesn't stop there. He also pronounces judgment upon Israel and Judah "for three transgressions...and for four" (2:4, 6). Judah is judged for rejecting God's law (2:4) and Israel is condemned for

the sins of bribery (2:6), immorality (2:7b) and hypocrisy (2:8).

Suddenly, Amos is no longer so popular! A preacher of social justice, Amos' dominant theme is righteousness. He articulates God's charge against Israel in three oracles. Each opens with "Hear this word," (3:1; 4:1; 5:1). This phrase, akin to the great "Hear O Israel" text of Deuteronomy 6:4, is full of the weight of God's authority.

God's Charges Against His People

The charges God makes against Israel are described one at a time. Israel cannot distinguish right from wrong and her homes are full of booty stolen from others (3:10). Amos compares the godless women of Samaria to the "cows of Bashan" — wealthy society ladies living in luxury and lounging around all day drinking wine.

Amos' third judgment (5:1-6:14) pronounces three "woes" upon Israel. They are the Lord's judgments against Israel's ignorance, indifference and indulgence. Because he knows the Lord is merciful, Amos pleads with Israel to repent and return to her God.

Amos' Timeless Message

The Lord issues the same plea to us today in the words of the Apostle Peter: "*Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord*" (Acts 3:19). Will we heed this message or will we turn a deaf ear to the timeless Word of God? ✨

*oracle – a prophetic pronouncement.

Bitterness Turns to Happiness for Israeli Woman

Chosen People Ministries' new congregation on the West Bank in Israel is already bringing in a harvest. One member, Ruth,* has had a bold witness for the Messiah at her job. One of her coworkers, Anna,* was attacking her bitterly. Suddenly, Anna's attitude changed completely. She began to approach Ruth with sincere questions about the Gospel and visited the congregation. There, Anna received the Lord! Now she describes herself as the "happiest woman in the world."

Jewish Couple Receives Salvation

When Martin and Martha* attended the fellowship led by Chosen People Ministries' Dennis K, Martha immediately found the Messiah's message of eternal life compelling. Martin, although interested, was more cautious. As they continued to attend, they sensed the love of the members of the fellowship and the conviction of the Holy Spirit.

Finally, at one of the meetings, both of them came to a saving knowledge of their Lord and Savior, Jesus, the Messiah of Israel. They are now meeting weekly with other believers to ground and strengthen their newly found faith.

Rejoicing in Berlin

As many Jewish evangelists will tell you, there is no more difficult mission field than one's own family—especially one's parents. This is why there is special rejoicing this month in the home of Vladimir Pikman, Chosen People Ministries' Branch Director in Berlin.

Vladimir's mother, who for many years resisted the Gospel, recently underwent surgery. While she was hospitalized, a woman from Vladimir's Messianic congregation visited her. Vladimir's mom finally listened to the Gospel and received the Messiah.

Vladimir is thrilled. He says, "I can hardly believe it happened, but it is so—she reads the Bible and prays now. Our many prayers have been answered."

Chosen People Ministries Partners "Down Under" with Celebrate Messiah

Chosen People Ministries is pleased to announce a new ministry partnership with Celebrate Messiah, the Australian Jewish mission led by Lawrence Hirsch. Although our official partnership is new, Lawrence and his wife, Louise, are well known in the field of Jewish missions. Now we will be working together in reaching the more than 100,000 Jewish people of Australia.

This expansion of our evangelistic presence to Australia is the result of much prayerful preparation. The first step was for President Mitch Glaser to view the work first-hand. He visited the Hirsches in Melbourne and was impressed with the numbers of Jewish people receiving the Lord and the need for more workers, especially among the Russian Jewish immigrants to Australia.

Klaudia Zhelezny, one of our Russian Jewish evangelists from Brooklyn, visited Melbourne for a short time to help the Hirsches in their ministry to Russian immigrants. This visit resulted in dozens more Russian Jewish people receiving the Lord. During another visit, Klaudia helped Celebrate Messiah begin an Australian Russian Jewish Messianic congregation! Recently, Celebrate Messiah and Chosen People Ministries organized a joint "To the Jew First" conference in Melbourne. More than 700 people attended the closing rally.

Both Boards of Directors have now approved our partnership and Celebrate Messiah is part of our Chosen People Ministries global network of ministries among the Jewish people. It joins works in Israel, Argentina, Ukraine, Canada, Germany, Mexico, England and the United States. We trust that the Lord will bless Celebrate Messiah as we work together in the unity of our beloved Messiah Jesus.



Lawrence & Louise Hirsch

*names have been changed



May 24 - 27, 2001

SIMCHA 2001

Celebrate Messiah's Joy

SIMCHA means joy—and what greater joy could you ask for than fresh air, great fellowship, and great teaching at our annual Chosen People Ministries Messianic Retreat? It's all happening this May 24-27 at scenic Schroon Lake, New York, in the heart of the Adirondack Mountains. Our featured speaker will be Sam Nadler, former president of Chosen People Ministries and now president of Word of Messiah Ministries. You won't want to miss this gathering of Jewish believers. Circle those dates, and sign up now!



July 29 - August 5, 2001

Enjoy an Experience in

Messianic Camping!

Call Bruce or Suzi Elman at 1-800-342-3870

Sometimes kids need to take a break from the hustle and bustle of everyday life to reflect, relax and renew their spiritual fervor.

SIMCHAT YELADIM offers the perfect setting. Come spend a week with other Messianic kids. Meet new people and renew old friendships. Bring your tennis shoes, bring your Bible and be ready to discover God in a whole new way!

- ✧ Are you 8 to 15 years old?
- ✧ Are you ready for a great week of camp in the Pennsylvania hills?
- ✧ Are you ready for great activities, fun, fellowship and worship?



Messiah in the Passover Kit

This kit will help churches, classes, or families have a Passover celebration of their own. Guaranteed to make your Passover celebration an unforgettable experience. Includes the *Messiah in the Passover* video, *How to Prepare for a Passover Dinner*, *Messianic Passover Haggadah*, a poster, and bulletin inserts.

item 5001 Price \$19.95^{US}



The Chosen People Newsletter

Chosen People Ministries has been taking the love of the Messiah to Jewish people worldwide since 1894.

The Chosen People Newsletter is published monthly by Chosen People Ministries

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Please remember Chosen People Ministries in your will.
"I will bless those who bless you."
(Genesis 12:3)

Visit us on the Web at www.chosenpeople.com