



PRESIDENT'S prayer letter

APRIL 2024

REFLECTIONS OF A JEWISH “JESUS FREAK”

Shalom, dear friend.

I hope this letter finds you rejoicing in the Lord. This year, April is a joyful month for me as my birthday falls one day before Passover! Most years, my birthday falls *during* Passover, and I have to endure eating unleavened birthday cakes. The only tolerable ones were those made with chocolate fudge. This year, I can eat a normal birthday cake (strawberry shortcake is my favorite!).

Now, to get down to the more serious part of why I am rejoicing in the Lord this Passover.

This year is my fifty-third as a believer in Messiah. Next month, I will celebrate the twenty-seventh anniversary of leading our historic Mission to the Jewish People. I began serving as the president of Chosen People Ministries on May 1, 1997. So, I have many blessings to enjoy this April, including celebrating Passover—my favorite Jewish holiday—and reflecting on continuing to lead this incredible work among Jewish people.

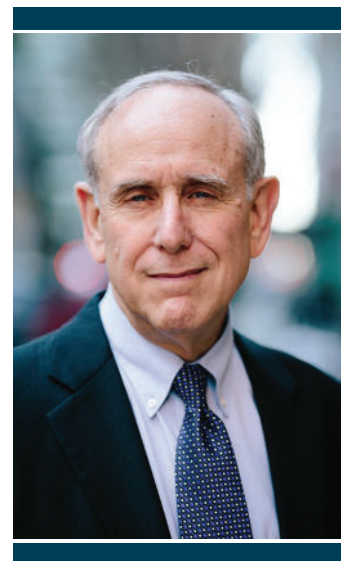
I would like to tell you how I came to believe in Jesus and ultimately become a missionary among my Jewish people!

GROWING UP IN NEW YORK AND HEADING WEST

I was born in Brooklyn, grew up in Queens, and lived in a very traditional Jewish home. I had my *bar mitzvah* (a Jewish rite of passage) when I was thirteen and then, like so many of my Jewish friends, stopped attending synagogue regularly. Each year, my parents sent me to Orthodox Jewish summer camp when we were not going to the *Borscht Belt*—the Catskill Mountains—where many Jewish people went to spend cooler summers outside the heat of New York City.

Eventually, my parents moved our family to central New Jersey, where I graduated high school at seventeen. My high school career had gone rapidly downhill when I started doing drugs. I still went to college, but only briefly before dropping out a few months later.

While at the University of Bridgeport in Connecticut, I made some new friends, Fred and Joan. Fred and I decided to move to Sausalito, California,



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Jesus Revolution movie portrayal of hippie preacher



Hippies proclaiming Jesus

to build a houseboat with his brother Bruce and best friend Jhan. In early spring 1970, we hitchhiked to San Francisco and eventually landed in Sausalito.

At the time, I knew nothing about the Jesus movement going on in San Francisco. I did not read Christian literature and gave no thought to Jesus. After a while, I was tired of doing drugs. We also had to move out of our houseboat because the building inspector condemned it. We left thousands of dollars of wood and supplies—as well as our dreams—floating on Sausalito Bay. We moved into a hippie commune called the *Freaky Dude Ranch*, which, though not a proper dude ranch, was quite freaky! I was there with about seventeen other people and lived in a closet with someone who eventually turned out to be a Satan worshiper!

I started doing transcendental meditation but was not very successful at it! I slowly moved away from drugs and got a job through the Marin County Board of Education, teaching in their outdoor education program at a campground near Pescadero, California.

**SEEING OUR LIVES REFLECTED IN
THE MOVIE, JESUS REVOLUTION,
MADE ME LAUGH AND CRY.**

THE REVOLUTION BEGINS

I loved the 2023 film *Jesus Revolution*. Seeing our lives reflected in a movie made me laugh and cry. I lived through it, and I can tell you the film is accurate. In the 1960s and 70s, the Lord moved

powerfully among young adults, and many of us were Jewish. I believe He can do it again, in any place and at any time, regardless of social conditions and even above and beyond our evangelistic efforts. I believe this outpouring of the Spirit upon my generation was perhaps due more to prayer than evangelism. As the movie portrays, there were hundreds, even thousands, of young seekers who were simply hungry for God! What a time!

One weekend, I went back to Sausalito to visit the spot where we used to keep the houseboat docked and ran into my friend Joan. She had also dropped out of college, stayed with us for a few weeks, and then left for Oregon to try to find some answers to life. She was picked up hitchhiking and brought to a commune in Coos Bay, Oregon, where she accepted the Lord. Finally, after some months, she came south from Coos Bay to San Francisco to tell Fred and me about Jesus.

Of course, she began witnessing to me by telling me the world was ending and other comments I perceived as foolishness. I tried to talk some sense into her as I felt she had either been drugged or hypnotized. Yet, she seemed happier, and after some convincing, she and Fred left for Coos Bay, and I was “left behind!” I was still working at the kid’s camp and enjoying the job quite a bit.

Eventually, I visited Fred and Joan and met the Christians at their commune, or “ranch.” It was one of the unnamed small Christian cooperatives started by a couple who believed God had told them to love and feed all their visitors. The first night I came to the ranch, I was picked up by rowboat. I was anything

but a believer in Jesus then, and the whole experience was quite exotic and spooky but also intriguing!

I met wonderful people, and every time I had a question, they pointed me to a Bible, which I began reading. I had read the Old Testament before, but it was mainly in Hebrew, which I did not understand very well. Now, I was reading it in English and enjoying it very much. I think I was probably beginning to search for God and was tired of my ragged lifestyle.

I was already thinking about going back to the New York area to return to college as I was frustrated with the selfishness and drugs.

HOW I MET JESUS

So, I was open to God but not very open to Jesus. I grew up in a strong Jewish community, was raised in a loving Jewish home, and could not possibly imagine how a Jewish person could believe in Jesus the Messiah and remain Jewish!

When I returned to the campground, all I could think about was God and Jesus. I kept reading the Old Testament, and finally, one day, I called out to God and said, "If You are real, show me." A few hours later, I found a copy of *Good News for Modern Man* glowing in the moonlight, sitting where there should

have been a phone book on the ledge of the only phone booth in the camp. Of course, I stole the book, which turned out to be a copy of the New Testament in modern English!

I could not stop reading the New Testament. I fell in love with Jesus. I thought He was great. I finally realized He was God in the flesh and felt much more comfortable with Jesus than I did with Eastern religions.

**I COULD NOT STOP READING
THE NEW TESTAMENT.
I FELL IN LOVE WITH JESUS.**

So, I told the Lord if He could possibly forgive and use someone who had almost destroyed his mind and soul, then I would do anything He wanted. I knew there was only one decision to make—whether I would dedicate myself to Jesus. Frankly, it was not a very hard choice. I knew He was the true Messiah of Jewish people and the Lord of my life, and all I wanted to do was follow Him.

**Remember to pray for
the hostages**



**I HOPE MY STORY INSPIRES YOU
TO PRAY FOR CHOSEN PEOPLE
MINISTRIES AS WE HAVE ENTERED
OUR 130TH YEAR OF MINISTRY.**

I am happy to identify as a Jesus-movement baby or even a *Jesus freak!* I wear it as a badge of honor, but the true honor goes to the God of grace, who saved me and has given me an abundant life. There is so much more to say! Just imagine the testimony book we will all write together when we have eternity to sing of His greatness!

**JOINING WITH
CHOSEN PEOPLE MINISTRIES**

After I came to faith, missionaries from Chosen People Ministries disciplined me, and the Mission paid my way through Bible college! I am personally grateful for our Mission, and I hope my story inspires

you to pray for Chosen People Ministries as we have entered our 130th year of ministry.

I asked our board of directors to establish a President's Fund for Missionary Training. Your gift today will be a founding gift to continue training young men and women from Jewish and non-Jewish backgrounds who are zealous for Jesus and want to enter full-time ministry among Jewish people.

Chosen People Ministries supported me, and I am hoping we can do the same for many others. We need \$300,000 this year for our scholarships, housing subsidies for our Feinberg Center in Brooklyn, and more. I know He will provide through His people!

Would you help me start this new fund and, together, reach Jewish people worldwide for the One who is our bright light in the darkness?

Please help Your Mission to the Jewish People train others like me who will serve the Lord among the Jewish community. Every gift is deeply appreciated.

Warmly in the Messiah,



Mitch

