

הארץ

ENCOUNTERS WITH PEACE IN A LAND OF STRIFE

By Stephen Katz

The media claim that eight recent terror attacks in the heart of downtown Jerusalem have reduced a bustling economic zone to an economic no-man's land. On a recent trip to Israel I found a very subdued atmosphere that seemed to confirm that claim. Even Tel Aviv—normally bustling with parties and nightlife on Saturday after sundown—seemed quiet, restrained.

As Jewish believers in Y'shua our hearts are tied to Israel and it would be easy to feel helpless and hopeless about what we see and hear on the news. But we need to remember, there are reasons to take heart—reasons the media will never portray. While the search for peace continues to play out in the political arena, growing numbers of Israelis are finding peace in their own lives—peace with God. The work of Jews for Jesus in Israel is just a microcosm of what God is doing among our people there, but I thought it might encourage you to hear from our staff about the joys and challenges of sharing Y'shua with Israelis. Maybe these anecdotes will give you a glimpse of how God is using the messianic Jewish community to raise the image of Y'shua high during a time when many Israelis are seeking answers.

SEARCHING FOR SPIRITUALITY: DAN

“When I share the gospel with young Israelis, they are open and want to know more. It's weird to them that an Israeli like myself believes in Y'shua, but they're attracted to us because they think we're radical or even cool to believe and promote such different ideas than those they are used to.

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Chadwick Meyer



searching for spirituality

blessed by their cursing

Y'shua isn't Catholic

ENCOUNTERS WITH PEACE IN A LAND OF STRIFE



Continued from page 1

All their lives they've been told what to do and have seen traditional Judaism, but something is obviously missing in their upbringing. Now, many are searching for spirituality.

"The most challenging part of our work is that we are competing with a lot of other religions and spiritual alternatives. Young Israelis might be into Buddhism, Bahai or Hinduism so I try to bring them back to their roots. I tell them, 'Sure, Buddhism may be cool or fun, but is that what you really believe? Is it in any way related to what you learned at home? Does it really give you peace?'"

"Young Israelis are attracted to Eastern religions because they want something different from what they were taught. These kids have just had an extreme experience in the army—they've been confronted by death and they're asking questions about what life is all about. They go to the religious leaders for answers and are told to follow a bunch of rules. They're told that they can't even tear toilet paper on Shabbat and they think that's ridiculous. So they look elsewhere. They are attracted to India as an exotic place because it's far away and all their friends are traveling there.

"That was the case with Oded. We met on the streets and he said he was open to finding out more about Messiah. He's into Tai Chi and

his 'master' is actually a religious Jew. While Oded was struggling to save money to study Eastern thought in India, his master was pressuring him to become Orthodox!

"So when Oded and I spoke he asked me what kinds of things believers in Y'shua are required to do. When considering something new, Israelis always want to know what they're getting into. I told him that there's freedom in the Messiah, and that it's not a matter of doing religious things—it's a matter of belief in the heart and a relationship with God. Even though Oded has left Israel to search for spirituality in the East, I believe that he'll remember our conversation and that God will use the interaction I had with Oded." —*Dan*

BLESSED BY THEIR CURSING: SHLOMY

"On the streets I share the Word of God and His promises to His people. In my experience, half of the people I speak with are open to hear more. The other half are confused. I hear their language and verbal abuse and I'd like to forget the words they yell at me. Some try to harm me not just verbally, but also physically. But they don't scare me. I'm actually blessed by their cursing (as I remember the words of Y'shua in Matthew 5:10-12).

"To their curses I respond, 'I love you. God loves you.'

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Chadwick Meyer

“I can share Y’shua with them because before I knew Him I was living among these people. I’m not an outsider. I know their lives and how they think and what they feel. I know their mentality. To be accepted by their friends, some of them just try to prove how mean they can be.

“Every day I continue to proclaim Y’shua because I was in the darkness and the Lord took me out of it—I want to share what the Lord did in my life. I had a special opportunity to do this when my wife and I went on vacation recently. While there, I met a man named Shimon. I spoke with him about the love of God and we talked for three hours. He had a broken heart and a broken body (Shimon had been wounded in the army). At the end of our conversation, Shimon prayed to receive the Lord. It changed his life and I am amazed that the Lord uses me to do something like that. I want to live only to do those things, even on my vacation.” —*Shlomy*

Y’SHUA ISN’T CATHOLIC: MOSHE

“I need to begin my day with devotions before I hit the ground. Even though my day is loaded, I want to begin by reminding myself whom I serve and taking time to find what He wants me to do. If I’m teaching people to love God and pray, then I need to do this myself. If I don’t love His Word enough, how can I hope they will love it more?

“Next I go out to the streets to talk to people, seeking those who want a relationship with God. You can always find people who are responsive to the gospel message. I think it’s the humble people—those who understand that they haven’t yet found the truth—that are the most open. It excites me to have a conversation on the street

that is direct and real. I like seeing people’s surprise when I tell them about things they didn’t know were in the Bible.

“I invite them to continue talking with me one-on-one—that’s where the real work and discussions take place. I love to see people come to Jesus, repent and grow in their faith to the point where they begin witnessing to their friends without me. I met with a young guy named Ronen, who introduced me to his friend Yaniv. Yaniv received the Lord and now he’s sharing his faith with his friends like Ofir and others. This kind of thing gives me great feelings of joy and satisfaction. I feel I’m part of an important historical process because Jesus said the gospel will go to all the world and then the end will come (Matthew 24:14).

“Some encounters are brief, just seeds planted. A couple of months ago I was handing out gospel tracts at a soccer game.* The TV news people came up to me and asked who Y’shua was rooting for, the Israeli team or the Spanish team. Their point was that the Spanish team was Catholic (believers in Jesus) and the Israeli team was non-believers. They probably thought I’d say Y’shua would be for the Spanish team. I told them He’d be for the Israeli team because He’s an Israeli and He’s Jewish, not Catholic. It was an opportunity to explain that Y’shua is the Jewish Messiah according to the Bible.” —*Moshe*

**Our staff in Israel write their own broadsides (tracts) as they did for this event.*

BECOMING SPIRITUAL PARENTS: MIRIAM

“Libby comes from an Orthodox family and received the Lord about a year ago. I met her at Rabin Square, the place where Yitzchak

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Spying out the Land through

PROJECT JOSHUA



Jews for Jesus wanted to put together a good program that could train Jewish believing college students in evangelism as well as encourage them in their Jewish identity in Y'shua. What better place to do that than in Israel?



When we first announced Project Joshua, a two-week study and evangelism trip to Israel, the situation in the Middle East was tense. Then things got worse. Project Joshua was scheduled over the

Christmas/New Year's school break of 2001-2002. We prayed and God encouraged us to stand fast, so we did not cancel the trip.

In retrospect, we can see how God protected us in amazing ways. We know that many were praying for the safety of our group and God answered those prayers. The suicide bombings and other violent acts stopped on December 16. The team left for Israel on the 26th. The violence didn't pick up again until January 9, a day after we left to return to the States.

We also know that many prayed for the group to have a time when their faith would be strengthened and their vision expanded. This prayer was certainly answered in the lives of the 13 young Jewish believers who came on Project Joshua.

Some of their time was spent receiving on-site teaching in areas of biblical and historical geography. They even followed the routes of some of the military campaigns recorded in the book of Joshua. Some time was spent in meeting other believers in the Land and learning about their lives and struggles. And some time was spent doing the ordinary tourist things like shopping. But what will endure

for eternity are the times these college students spent on the streets of Tel Aviv, Haifa and Jerusalem sharing the message of life in Y'shua with Israelis. Will, one of the students, who had been involved in our camp programs and Ingatherings, remarked, "You know, I've been involved with Jews for Jesus for a long time but I was never on a sortie (tract-passing expedition) before. I always tried to avoid it. Now I can see that it is just a way of meeting people and it really works!" And it does.

The team drove to Tel Aviv and saw the Jews for Jesus office, where they prepared for their time of evangelism. They were given instructions and then were split into four teams, led by experienced staff workers. Each team went to a different part of the city to engage Israelis in a discussion of the Messiahship of Jesus. That day they were grateful and thrilled to speak with many people, including 18 who gave their addresses so they could receive more material to read in Hebrew.

Language was not really a barrier, as many Israelis spoke English well enough to communicate with the students. Though there were some that were verbally hostile, most were very willing to talk openly about matters of faith. The students were pumped up after their times out on the streets.

Here are some stories about the students themselves. We trust that you will be encouraged with us in knowing that God is raising up a new generation of Jewish believers with a heart for evangelism and a concern for our people who are lost without Y'shua:

Dan found that most Israelis don't mind discussing religion, but they have little or no idea of who Y'shua is. One of the sorties he enjoyed most was at Tel Aviv University. A



young woman engaged him in conversation.

Dan explained, “We’re Jews who believe that Y’shua is the Messiah who was prophesied about in the Old Testament, the Tenach.”

She asked him how he became “one of those Jews” so he told her how he had come to believe in Y’shua. She

answered, “I don’t understand how you can be both! There must be some mistake!” They talked for a

while, and she gave Dan her name and

phone number so that one of our local missionaries could call and give her more information.

Tamar talked to two young men about messianic prophecy. When they realized that she was a believer, they asked her, “How do you know it is true?” She explained that she knew from her own experience and how God had moved in her life. (This was the first time she had ever shared her testimony in public while witnessing to someone.) She also told them that she knew that Jesus was who He claimed to be by what it said in the Bible. Tamar had a list of messianic prophecies that Jews for Jesus had given her. And so she shared from Micah 5, where the prophet says that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. She also showed them part of Isaiah 53. They were totally blown away and said, “That’s in *our* Bible?” Tamar had a Bible in her backpack so she showed them. Then they gave their contact information for follow-up.

The group was in a shopping mall wearing their Jews for Jesus T-shirts. Some were more outgoing than others about walking up to people and engaging them in conversation.

Naomi was somewhat shy, so some of the others on the team

helped her to be more outgoing by

initiating conversations with unbelievers, so that she could then

join in. **Daniel** and **Athena** went up to a group of Israeli soldiers who were standing

outside of one of the stores. The conversation didn’t seem to be going anywhere until Naomi was able to give the soldiers our proposal statement, which basically begins like this: “Can I ask you

something? Who do you think Jesus is?” The conversation went really well—Naomi got their contact information for the branch to follow up.

One of our team members, **Daniel**, was witnessing to an Israeli who thought it was strange that they were having a conversation about Jesus because he had just gotten a video in the mail — it was the “Jesus” film! The man was open to learning about different religions and that’s why he responded to get the film. He told Daniel that he thinks about such things in a more intellectual way and Daniel explained how there is one absolute truth and how he could know it. The man gave his contact information so we could witness more to him.

Some of the team had the chance to share their faith with several “Birthright Israel” students. These are Jewish college students from around the world who come to explore the Land, much the same way that we do. The Jewish community sponsors their trips. There were several “unplanned meetings” with those who wanted to hear about Jesus.

One of the trip’s highlights was a great opportunity to share our faith with a group of Orthodox young people outside of a falafel restaurant in Bet Shemesh. They asked a lot of questions after seeing our T-shirts, which read (in Hebrew and English): “Jews for Jesus; Is There Such a Thing?”

The group drove to lunch at a small restaurant owned by a Yemenite man named Shalom. Their tour leader, Efraim, had previously been visiting with Shalom whose son had become a believer in Y’shua within the last

couple of years. While enjoying the unique Yemenite flavors, a

group of Lubavitcher Chassidim came around, asking if anyone wanted to lay tefillin (phylacteries).

Some of our group went out to talk with them. The Lubavitchers believe that their rebbe, the late Menachem

Schneerson, is the messiah. They

admit that he was never raised from the dead,

but they say he will some day. They think that if they can get others to lay tefillin, that will hasten his return. The students



confronted these religious Jews with what the Scriptures had to say about the Messiah, including where he would be born (Beit-lechem, Bethlehem). The Chassidic Jews told them that they had never read in the biblical prophets where the messiah was to be born. They continued to quote from famous Jewish rabbis and sages, but they were unfamiliar with the biblical text. It was sad.

The group did evangelism in Haifa, but it was raining pretty hard so they split into two teams and went to a couple of malls to try to engage people in conversation. There were many, many good discussions with people, 12 of whom gave their addresses so that they could have further contact with our Israel staff.

One day the group headed out on the Sea of Galilee, and in the middle of the sea the captain turned off the engines and they had a good time of worship. Sammy, one of the men who worked on board, sat with them and, though not a believer, followed along and joined in during the songs that were in Hebrew. He was given a Hebrew edition of *More Than a Carpenter*, which he said he would read.

On the plane going home, many of the Project Joshua students were wearing their Jews for Jesus T-shirts, which opened lots of witnessing opportunities. Even before they got on the plane, their presence was known. One of the students, **Mitch**, was



Crossing the Sea of Galilee

the last person on the bus that transported the passengers to the plane and as soon as he got on the bus the whole Project Joshua group started cheering. Many in the crowd on the bus looked at our group and started talking to Project Joshua students around them, and continued these conversations during the 13-hour flight!

Project Joshua is one of several youth programs sponsored by Jews for Jesus. For information on participating in upcoming opportunities, contact Stephen Katz @ (415) 864-2600 or MinAtLarge@jews4jesus.org.



CELEBRATING SHAVUOT IN ISRAEL

By Daphna Sadan

In Israel, at Shavuot time the children come to school dressed in white clothes. The little ones wear crowns of flowers and leaves. We decorate baskets with flowers and leaves and put in fruit as a symbol of the firstfruits that were brought to the Temple. We also fill the baskets with dairy foods like yogurt and cheese (sometimes homemade). At home, we eat meals that include dairy. On the kibbutzim, they celebrate Shavuot as an agricultural feast; they sing and dance and bring forth first fruits of the livestock and the harvest.

Typically, a homemade yogurt cheese such as this one is enjoyed:



LABANEH

Ingredients: 4 cups plain yogurt • 1 cup sour cream • 1 teaspoon salt

Stir all ingredients together in large bowl. Put several layers of cheesecloth in a large colander or strainer. Place the cheese mixture on the cheesecloth and put the strainer over a larger bowl, so that it rests over it. Refrigerate overnight.

The next day, remove yogurt cheese and place it in a clean bowl. You may stir in chopped olives, green onions, chopped dried tomatoes, a little olive oil – or you may leave the cheese as is. Serve spread on crackers or bread or as a dip with fresh vegetables or fruit.

TWO WALLS By Melissa Moskowitz

In his hands, he folds the note,
Smaller and smaller
The words he'd found so hard to write
The question he'd found so hard to ask

His feet move slowly
Towards the stones touched by holy men
Black coats, black hats, gray beards
these begin to fill his eyes.

Ardent swaying, lips giving shape to murmured hopes,
the buzz of commotion like a thousand bees.
His heart quickens as he gets closer
to the wall he has faced so many times before.

Gray slips of paper
Stuffed deep in cracks, crags etched by time.
To these tattered remains of prayers; hopes; dreams
he places his, with a trembling hand.

It is a request he dare not utter aloud
A silent cry to the Almighty
From one whose faith has been folded over the years
Smaller and smaller

Until tradition seems but a stranglehold
Wrapped tight as a sign upon the hand
between the eyes
but not around his heart . . .

So, today, his note is
A prayer to know if
That which is "new," that which the "holy" call
"naarishkeit, foolishness,
For the *goyim*—for them—not for us!"
is part of the mystery

He stares at his empty hands, praying
Hoping that the Almighty will hear him,
Hoping to hear the Almighty.

"Call to Me
and I will answer you,
and I will tell you great and mighty things
which you do not know."



BYG IS COMING NEAR YOU!

Operation Behold Your God is well into its second year as you're reading this. Our outreaches in Chicago, San Francisco, Milwaukee, Minsk and Minneapolis in 2001 saw many Jews and Gentiles give their hearts to the Lord. Faithful friends and volunteers of Jews for Jesus helped to make these outreaches possible and now we're continuing on this year to reach out to the cities of:

Atlanta – at the end of June
Boston – August
Hartford – October
New Haven – October
Portland – June
St. Louis – September

There are many ways to get involved: You don't have to be a "professional" to learn how to hand out tracts on the streets (we'll train you), or follow up in phone calls in the evenings (we'll train you to do that, too). We need people who will pray, give and sign on as short-term workers. We need your church or congregation to commit to pray for these outreaches, and perhaps send some to work on them.

Come be part of what we're doing. You can look up more information on BYG at www.jfjonline.org OR call or write Stephen Katz at MinAtLarge@jews4jesus.org or (415) 864-2600.

Rabin was assassinated, but it was in that place that we brought her the gospel of life. Haredi (ultra-Orthodox) families don't send their children to the army like the rest of Israelis do—they get a special exemption for religious reasons. So it was a big step for Libby when, as a new believer, she decided to go into the army. Her rabbi told her that her decision meant she couldn't come home. We have become her surrogate family and Libby visits us on breaks from the army.

“A similar situation happened with another Orthodox girl we led to the Lord. Danit is being kicked out of her parents' house for her faith, which is very hard for her, but perhaps made her desire to do her military service with others her age a little easier. Danit listed us on her paperwork for the army and shortly afterwards we got a letter from the army addressed to her 'honorable parents.' It made me smile because we are, in fact, her spiritual parents.” —*Miriam*

FILLING A NICHE: JEANNIE

“Israeli society is a very 'we' society. Everyone identifies with or belongs to some kind of group, whether religious or secular. Parents are always looking for afternoon *chugim* (clubs) to keep their children busy and safe after school. The focus of my ministry is to fill this niche with a Bible-based program for kids. Four years ago, I started with pre-school kids, and now I lead five clubs in three different cities and teach kids from four to ten years old. One child's parents don't believe in Y'shua, but the mother wrote a

note to me saying it's okay for her child to attend. Most of the parents tell me how much the kids look forward to this weekly activity and I'm excited to help strengthen their identity as a group of Jewish believers in Israeli society.” —*Jeannie*

So when the newspapers and television anchors are blaring bad news about Israel, remember these new images: Young Israelis exploring their own spirituality. Orthodox Jews coming to faith in their Messiah. Bold gospel proclamation in the Land. A growing awareness in Israel that there *are* Jews who believe in Jesus.

As Jewish believers, we should pray for our brothers and sisters in the Land. While writing this article I received a phone call from Efraim, our staff leader in the Land. He told me that this month alone, five Israelis prayed with our staff to receive Y'shua. Pray for these new believers to grow in their faith. Pray that God will unify the believers in Israel and meet their needs, financial and spiritual. Pray for the welfare of the congregations, most of which are not large. Pray that fear will not be a factor that impedes the proclamation of the gospel. Ask God to raise up more Israeli believers who exercise courage to make Messiah known. Finally, remember to pray for the peace of Jerusalem.

bulletin board

2002 WEST COAST INGATHERING

October 24 - October 27
Mission Springs Conference Center
Scotts Valley, California
Contact: Robyn Wilk, (415) 387-9980
2103 Clement, San Francisco, CA 94121
E-mail: SFBranch@aol.com

2002 EAST COAST INGATHERING

October 11 - October 14 (Columbus Day)
Blue Mountain Christian Retreat Center
New Ringold, Pennsylvania
Contact: Mitch Forman; (212) 683-7077
109 East 31st Street, New York, NY 10016
E-mail: NYJ4Jesus@aol.com

2002 MIDWEST INGATHERING

November 14 - November 17
Lake Lawn Resort
Lake Delavan, Wisconsin
Contact: Melanie Rose, (847) 679-2680; 4118 Oakton St.,
Skokie, IL 60076; E-mail: JFJCHI@aol.com

2002 SOUTH EAST INGATHERING

October 11 - October 14
(Columbus Day)
Ramada Inn Surfside
Daytona Beach, Florida
Contact: Stan Meyer
(954) 917-3404
PO Box 590866
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33359
E-mail: FLJ4Jesus@aol.com