

DIRECTOR'S LETTER

Shalom in our Messiah,
We have just come to the end of an exciting time where Messiah was made known to Jewish people. We have just hosted two exciting debates. The first, in London, asked the question, 'Can Jews believe in Jesus?' and the second debate, held the following night in Oxford, asked whether it is possible for Jews to believe a man could in any way be God.

We believe that these debates might very well prove to be a watershed event here in the UK. They show everyone—Jews and Christians—that our faith in Messiah is credible and can be well defended. I know that it has caused a number of Jewish people to think more about the claims of our Lord Yeshua (Jesus). This is a wonderful thing. There were Jewish people in attendance at both



Daniel Nessim

debates, people whose names we still don't know, who nevertheless heard the Good News in a way they have probably never heard it before. We may never know the effect on their hearts of the things they have heard, but we do know that the Word of God is powerful.

A second positive outcome of these debates is the reassurance that it gives to believers. So many Jewish believers in Yeshua struggle with their faith, and this cannot be ignored! The book of Hebrews in the New Testament testifies to the temptation to deny Yeshua in order to be accepted in the Jewish community once again. Dr. Michael Brown, a Jewish believer himself, was able to show by his very presence that Jews can and do believe in Yeshua and in the reality of Yeshua's deity. His arguments at both debates were friendly, persuasive and to the point. An ancient Jewish saying states that 'he who saves a single soul is as if he has saved the whole world'. We certainly know that there is much rejoicing in heaven over every single believer's faith in Yeshua.

One of the fears that people have is that debates can be angry and confrontational, and not constructive. Did that happen? I don't think so. Rabbi Boteach and Dr. Michael Brown actually have a respectful friendship of sorts. It is not necessary to agree with another person in order to respect him or her. Many of the points that Rabbi Boteach brought out were actually thought-provoking and worth hearing. It is my hope that many of the believers who attended the debates will have actually come away with a better idea of how Jewish people think about the issue of Yeshua and Christianity. As a ministry, one of our goals is to be an advocate for the Jewish people, and in fact Rabbi Boteach was able to do so very well.

If we really care for Jewish people, as we do, will we not seek to understand and love them? It was



our Lord himself who became one of us so that he could personally experience humanity and our own weaknesses. In so doing He ever sets the example for us.

We hope to do ever more to reach the Jewish people and find ways to present the Gospel in clear, creative and sensitive ways. Your support of our ministry is greatly valued.

Daniel

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PS We plan to make a DVD of the debate in Oxford available soon. We'll let you know when it is ready.

NEWS BRIEFS



Holocaust Survivors Celebrate Passover at Jerusalem Messianic Centre

Twenty Holocaust survivors celebrated the Passover with our staff at the Jerusalem Messianic Centre. These precious souls were especially blessed to be together, as many of them live alone. The evening was wonderful, with songs, laughter and lots of food. It was the first time some of these folks had ever heard the Gospel. Our Israel team writes, 'We were thrilled and honoured to host them and pleased to hear that there were some who wanted to attend a Bible study or worship service. Please pray for these future gatherings and studies together!'

Landmark Ruling in Israel for Messianic Believers

The Israeli High Court of Justice has ruled that Messianic Jews are entitled to Israeli citizenship according to the Law of Return if their father is Jewish. This overturns 15 years of decisions by the State, which had consistently ruled against Messianic Jewish applications for citizenship. This is a major victory for members of the Messianic Jewish community who had petitioned the High Court for new immigrant status and citizenship because they were the offspring of fathers who were Jewish.

The Messianic Movement: A Bright and Promising Future



Clearly we live in remarkable times. In recent decades, we have witnessed the return of Jewish people to the Land of Israel. Clearly this fulfils, at least in part, the promises of God proclaimed by the Jewish prophets, that the day would come when the Jewish people who were scattered across the face of the earth would return to Zion.

Another remarkable sign is the growing number of Jewish people who are coming to know Jesus as their Saviour. Sometimes in the UK it doesn't seem that way, but worldwide, that is the picture. We know from past experience that the Lord works in different countries where Jewish people live at different times. Right now the greatest growth is in Israel. A decade ago it was among Russian Jews.

The result of this growth is known as the Messianic Jewish movement. One of the most popular terms used for Jewish believers today is 'Messianic Jew.' This movement is growing—although we have a long way to go! I do not think that our movement includes more than 1% of the worldwide Jewish population of about 14 million.

Years ago, there were few Jewish believers in the UK. Some, like Leon and Marie Awerbuch, who worked with Chosen People Ministries (then the ABMJ) in London in the 1940s, were fleeing Nazi persecution. Others were stalwart visionaries, prepared to pay the cost of ostracism from the Jewish community for the sake of their Messiah. Back then such believers were often known as Hebrew Christians, and they had no congregations of their own. Now, there are a number of congregations for Jewish believers forming in the UK and hundreds more around the world.

Last year, we held a conference in Germany where we invited Russian Jewish believers who were planting congregations to participate in what turned out to be an excellent training programme. Representatives from almost 90 Russian-speaking congregations came to the conference—from Russia, the Ukraine, Israel, Canada, Australia, the United States and many other countries. The most remarkable thing was that not one of these congregations existed before 1989.

In Israel, we are witnesses to the doubling and tripling of the Messianic Jewish community in the Land. Today, there are more than a hundred congregations in Israel of every shade. Increasingly, their membership and the languages they speak reflect the people of the Land. Services are held in

Hebrew and the children are full members of Israeli national life. We do indeed have much for which to be grateful!

In Brooklyn, New York, we were able to organise a symposium of Messianic leaders and scholars from a wide variety of streams just last autumn. We were impressed by the breadth and depth of scholarship there. Clearly, we are in a time of historic change. There is a movement afoot of Jewish people coming to their Messiah.

Messianic congregations that have a significant number of Jewish members are clearly a sign of that. They are also a great blessing to the church, for by encouraging Jewish people to maintain their identity as Jewish believers in Yeshua and not forget their origins, they safeguard the Church's connection to its Jewish roots.

Chosen People Ministries intentionally plants Messianic congregations because we believe that Jewish people should have the ability to worship the Lord in a culturally comfortable setting, and in a place where they would feel comfortable to bring their Jewish family and friends.

What Is a Messianic Congregation?

The growth of the Messianic movement is one of the most compelling stories in the recent history of world missions. From a total of just a half-dozen Messianic congregations almost forty years ago, there are now over four

RESOURCES

To the Jew First: The Case for Jewish Evangelism in Scripture and History

Based upon the biblical mandate to take the Gospel 'to the Jew first,' this comprehensive resource looks at the historical, theological, and biblical context for Jewish evangelism, and provides encouragement for Christians and Messianic Jews engaged in this task. *To the Jew First* includes contributions by Richard Averbeck, Craig Blasing, Walter Kaiser, Richard Pratt, Jr. and ten other evangelical scholars.



To the Jew First, 352 pages
£10 plus £2 P&P.
Darrell L. Bock & Mitch Glaser

For more Messianic Jewish products, visit us online at

www.chosenpeople.org.uk

The Messianic Movement continued from page 3

hundred around the world, with over a hundred in Israel alone, and a dozen or more in the UK.

Messianic congregations are faith communities that stress the Jewish context of the Gospel of Jesus the Messiah. By utilizing features of the synagogue that are consistent with New Testament teaching, Messianic congregations provide a familiar environment for Jewish seekers. Messianic congregations often employ Jewish forms of worship, use Hebrew in their liturgy and stress the connection of Messiah to the Hebrew Scriptures.

“Today, there are more than a hundred Messianic Jewish congregations in the Land.”

At the very beginning of New Testament times, there were nothing but Messianic congregations. As the first Jewish followers of Jesus gathered to worship and learn, they saw their new faith as a continuation of Jewish life. An illuminating snapshot of their practice is found in Acts 2:46-47: “So continuing daily with one accord in the Temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.” The early believers practised their faith as Jewish disciples of Messiah.

Although history and prejudice combined to obscure the Jewish roots of Christianity, Jewish followers of Jesus the Messiah have existed throughout the centuries. Today, the emergence of modern Messianic congregations owes much to them.

Chosen People Ministries has planted over two dozen Messianic congregations and has seen the Lord draw Jewish seekers through them to ‘taste and see that the Lord is good’ (Psalm 34:8).



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

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