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The Chosen People

SERVING THE JEWISH PEOPLE SINCE 1894



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Dr. Mitch Glaser
International
Director
Chosen People
Ministries

AN UNREACHED PEOPLE GROUP

Dear friend,
Shalom in the name of our Messiah Jesus.

I am writing from Israel where Chosen People Ministries is hosting about 600 fellow believers for a tour, a Bible conference, and a glorious celebration of Israel's seventieth anniversary. The fellowship has been wonderful and so many of us have had good opportunities to share the gospel with both Jewish Israelis and lots of Arab Muslims as well.

We have also enjoyed having many of the Chosen People Ministries Israel staff share their testimonies and tell us about the good things God is doing in the Holy Land. Please pray for our ongoing work in Israel among Holocaust survivors, children, soldiers, young people, and families. Please pray for Maxim, one of our most faithful and effective workers who needs a kidney transplant and is on daily dialysis. We are praying for a donor! Meanwhile, he leads our work among the elderly Holocaust survivors. We had the joy of having about fifty survivors join us for dinner the other night, and we heard the testimony of one of them who came to faith through this ministry. There was not a dry eye among us!

There is so much more to tell, and I will try and dedicate an upcoming newsletter to our work in Israel, especially as we enter this seventy-first year of modern Israel's existence. All I can say is that there are many more Jewish believers in Jesus in Israel today than probably since the first century. According to a recent survey, there are about 25,000-30,000 Jewish believers in Jesus in Israel. We are using Facebook to reach many Israelis. A week does not go by when we do not send out more than fifty *Isaiah 53 Explained* books in Hebrew to Israelis who request them.

We even have quite a few who indicate that they are religious Jews. This is amazing and encourages us to pray that the Lord will reach even the most observant Jewish people in Israel and across the globe. I share the same broken heart as the Apostle Paul who wrote, "*Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation. For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge*" (Romans 10:1-2).

Ultra-Religious Jewish People: Ripe for Harvest?

If I asked you what group of Jewish people would become the largest group of Jewish people in the next twenty years, you would probably answer, "non-religious Jewish people." This is really common wisdom as our society is becoming more and more secular as the days go by. Most Jewish people do not regularly attend synagogue any more than non-Jews attend church.



Our world is quickly moving further and further away from the Creator and this is especially true in Europe and North America. However, according to those who study the Jewish community, it is predicted that the most identifiable group of Jewish people in the years ahead might actually be the ultra-Orthodox, or what we call the *Haredim*. The Hebrew word *Haredim* means "to tremble," since these very religious Jewish people tremble before God and show Him honor and devotion by keeping the Law, known as

the Torah, which refers to the five books of Moses as interpreted by the sages of the Jewish people.

My Own Jewish Upbringing

I was raised modern Orthodox, went to synagogue, learned about the Jewish religion, and studied how to read the Bible in Hebrew. But, I was still very different from the religious Jews you see wearing black clothing, having lots of children, and living the Haredi lifestyle. These communities are spread across the globe. *There are approximately one million in Israel, a few hundred thousand in Brooklyn and 40-50 thousand in the UK, predominantly in London, Manchester and Gateshead.*¹

I wish I could tell you that there are many Haredim who have come to know the Lord, but really there are just a few. When they come to faith in Jesus, they often lose their families and jobs, and are rejected by the community. Of course, the community does not really understand the gospel. They do not know that Jesus and His first disciples were Jewish and they are only aware of the type of Christianity that persecuted the Jewish people. Most religious Jewish people have never met a born-again Christian!

On the Derekh

This burden for the Haredim led Chosen People Ministries to spearhead a conference with other Jewish ministry leaders this past January. "On the Derekh" means "On the Path." We named the conference as such since Haredi Jewish people place a high value of walking by the ways of God and staying true to the Torah. When they are not, they often say they are "off the derekh." The conference focused on learning, brainstorming, and praying for the salvation of ultra-Orthodox Jewish people. It was the first conference of its kind since the Holocaust and all who attended recognized how much our movement needs God's wisdom and power to know how to present Yeshua to the Haredi Jewish community. As believers in Jesus, we know that He is the one true path!

This week-long conference on reaching ultra-Orthodox Jewish people was held at our Charles Feinberg Brooklyn Messianic Center, which is in the heart of one of the key Orthodox Jewish areas of Brooklyn. I gave a lecture on evangelistic work in the past, and Zhava, my wife, taught on the history of the ultra-Orthodox Jewish movement. She lectured about how this community began and how so many of these precious people ended up in Brooklyn! We also had sessions on what is currently being done to reach these folks with the gospel and had many discussions on the development of strategies and new tools for evangelism.

We had about fifty people attend the training conference, and most were missionaries to the Jewish people from more than a dozen different ministries. We studied together, prayed, and discussed various strategies and ways that we can work together to reach this group with the gospel. One of the high points of the conference was having an Orthodox rabbi speak to our group about the lifestyle of this unique community of Jewish people.

We also conducted a prayer walk through the Orthodox areas of Brooklyn and had short conversations with many, even about the Lord. It was a great time, and I believe that in the future we will do a lot more to reach this group for the Lord.



What's Next?

We are asking you and others to pray for God to raise up people with a heart for outreach among the Haredim. We are working toward creating resources to support those who leave the community. Last year, during our summer outreach, Shalom Brooklyn, we completed more than one hundred surveys of Haredim on the streets of Brooklyn and discovered that 12 percent of Haredim say that they have read at least parts of the New Testament. This is probably a higher percentage than I had previously thought!

This was encouraging, and we believe this indicates an openness to reading the New Testament. We are also developing ads on Facebook and using other forms of social media. We are committed to finding new and creative ways to share the gospel with these beloved Haredim. In fact, Chosen People Ministries has dozens of staff and volunteers sharing the gospel this month on the streets of Brooklyn. They are again using surveys as a way to learn more about the Haredim, and, oftentimes, the surveys lead to good conversations about the gospel.

We are also experimenting this summer with service projects in the Haredi community. We clean up parks in the religious areas, visit the sick and elderly, and find other ways to show God's love through the Messiah Jesus to Haredi families. These things are always a good testimony. We also have a special burden for ultra-Orthodox Jewish women. Our Shalom Brooklyn teams, especially women, are meeting Haredi women and their children in local parks and trying to befriend some of them. As you will read further, the Haredi moms have many children, and as believers we have a lot to learn from them about raising children.

Your prayers and support are so important to us, especially as we begin to focus more of our efforts on reaching the Haredim. One of my favorite passages of Scripture is Zechariah 12:10 where the prophet tells us what is going to happen at the second coming of Jesus. Zechariah writes,

I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn.

When I think about those Jewish people turning to Jesus at this future moment, I envision the majority of the men dressed in black with long beards and side curls and the women wearing long dresses and scarves on their heads. Can you see it? Who else would be so eagerly expecting the Messiah at that time?

So, please pray with me for the salvation of the ultra-Orthodox Jewish community and pray that we will be able to expand our work across the UK and mainland Europe. We could not do this without your loving generosity and prayers, of which we are incredibly thankful.

Shalom from Jerusalem,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mitch".

Mitch Glaser
International Director

1. <https://www.bod.org.uk/jewish-facts-info/jews-in-numbers/>

OUR MISSIONARIES

We are deeply grateful for your prayers and support as it makes it possible for us to minister the Gospel to Jewish people here in London. I am rejoicing at the developments we are seeing happen in the Messianic congregation



**FIONA SORBALA
REPORTS**

as we try to prepare for the day when we will see more Jewish people come to know Messiah. In our children's Bible class we have ten children, six of whom have some kind of Jewish background, so it's a privilege to teach the Bible to them and show the Jewish background of our faith as we learn together. We have started a monthly social event—in June we had a picnic and this month a film and pizza night.

As we head into the summer I am looking forward to the possibility of being able to participate in a camp in Finland which is being organised by our Israel staff for Holocaust survivors in September. The camp will be hosted in Finland with Chosen People Ministries staff there and I am hoping that it will be possible for me to go. As many of you might know I spent almost ten years living and working in the Former Soviet Union and the Lord has given me a love for Russian-speaking Jewish people that continues to challenge me.

There are around 180,000 elderly Holocaust survivors in Israel and sadly almost a third live in poverty. It is estimated that by 2025 there will be less than 50,000. This is why Chosen People Ministries seeks to minister the love of Messiah to them, so that they might come to know Him who came to redeem them. This camp is not only an opportunity to bless them but it gives us time to talk with them about the Messiah. I am currently raising money for this and would value your prayers for the Lord's provision.

With blessings

Fiona
Fiona

The last two months I have spent in my favourite place in the world—Israel! I have been helping to take groups of Christian young adults all around the land, from worshipping on the Sea of Galilee, to praying in the Garden of Gethsemane, to baptizing people in the Jordan River. It has been a whirlwind of a trip and I have seen people's faith transformed and been able to connect and share the gospel with many Jewish people.

The first day I arrived and checked into the hotel in Tel Aviv, I met a real life Samaritan named Shmuel. We engaged in a conversation about Israel and I told him that I am leading a tour of Israel for Christians and why I think biblically it is important for Christians to come and 'taste and see' what is happening in Israel since there is so much anti-Israel sentiment all over the world, including in the church. We discussed the prophecies in Ezekiel, Amos and Isaiah about the Jewish people returning from the four corners of the earth and being established in their land. He had assumed I was Jewish due to my knowledge of the Bible and Israel and also after mentioning that my grandfather was in the Holocaust.

When he saw the cross on my Bible he was horrified and asked why I had that on there. I explained that I believe Jesus is the Messiah and that Jesus is a Jew and that he should read the New Testament as Jewish people wrote it. He couldn't believe it! I told him that there are over 20,000 Jewish people in Israel that believe in Jesus being the Messiah and it's growing. He was very intrigued. Please pray for Shmuel the Samaritan that he would read the New Testament and encounter Jesus just like the Samaritan woman did at the well.



**EMILY EMANUEL
SHARES**

I also engaged with Orthodox Jewish boys who played music with some of the Christian musicians that were part of the group. They all came back to the lobby of the hotel to do some more jam sessions. We stayed up into the early hours of the morning talking about the Bible and the Talmud. I had an amazing conversation with a guy called Benjamin, who wanted to understand how I could prove that Jesus kept the Torah and therefore could be the Messiah. We talked about this and were both challenged! We also opened up various chapters of the Hebrew Bible, such as Jeremiah 31 and Isaiah 53, to discuss the prophecies concerning the Messiah. I also shared my testimony of how I came to faith and he took it in. Please pray for Benjamin that he would really seek out truth.

I am getting ready to do outreach in New York amongst the Jewish communities—please pray for favour, wisdom and energy.

With love
Emily
Emily

WOULD YOU LIKE, SIMON, FIONA OR EMILY TO
SPEAK AT YOUR CHURCH OR GROUP?

CONTACT OUR OFFICE ON

0208 455 7911 OR
TERRYG@CHOSENPEOPLE.ORG.UK





**SIMON LISSAK
WRITES**

How exciting to have a newsletter entirely dedicated to reaching the Ultra Orthodox! For years this has been a work that I have laboured over in the UK with a small number of people from churches and other missions who all have a heart to reach the seemingly unreachable.

I live just twenty minutes from Stamford Hill, the largest Haredi community in the UK, and have a long-standing connection to the area. My mother was a teacher there over forty years ago, my wife went to school there as a child, and the first Jewish believer I ever met was born there and became my mentor when I first came to faith.

But I believe I got 'hooked' on this ministry by a single event. I vividly remember passing the gates of an Orthodox Jewish boys' school as the children poured out onto the street at the end of their day. Suddenly boys of five to ten years' old swarmed around me, all boys the same age as my sons, all dressed like 'mini-rabbis' and with little or no hope of ever hearing about their Messiah. I thought about the almost limitless access my sons have to the Gospel, and committed myself to doing what I could to engage this precious community with the truth about Jesus.

That was nearly ten years ago. We now have regular work in Stamford Hill, Gateshead and Manchester—the three dominant 'hubs' of the 40-45,000-strong UK Orthodox community.

Over the years 'door to door' work has proved most effective in Stamford Hill and I now have a handful of Jewish men who will talk to me and even invite me into their homes. The great challenge in this community is that I have not found any evangelical churches there for me to work with. We believe that the Gospel needs to grow organically from within a community, so please pray that in the coming years we would be able to partner with a church plant in this area.

In Gateshead I am delighted to tell you that I have working relationships with a growing number of evangelical churches and I will be doing outreach with them this summer. Over the last three years I have developed a particularly close relationship with one church, who now has its own building just on the edge of the community in Bensham. I am excited to see how this will affect our ability to engage with a community that is extremely guarded and actually makes the work in Stamford Hill seem easy!

Lastly, work in North Manchester has now begun. This was the 'missing piece of my jigsaw', and I am delighted to tell you that we have started work there with one of our experienced volunteers. Oliver has worked with me in Stamford Hill and Bensham and so I am delighted that we are now co-leading this new project together. We are at the early stages but we hope to draw on our experience to develop a long-term 'partnership strategy' with churches and individuals in order to connect with this large Orthodox community.

If you would like to know details of individuals you can pray for, then please contact the office and we'd be happy to give you specific names and situations that we desperately need prayer for.

Thank you for being a great part of this ministry.

Simon Lissak
Simon



BY BRIAN CRAWFORD

Haredim is a term that refers to the ultra-Orthodox, the most obviously religious within the Jewish community. On the streets of Brooklyn, when we ask Haredim to describe themselves, they often say they practice



“Torah Judaism.” This positive definition asserts that the Haredim practice a form of Judaism that tries to remain separate from the influences of modern and secular life. Sometimes the Haredim appear to be living in a time capsule of nineteenth-century Europe of “bygone” past, but for this community, the past was a time when Jewish people cherished faith, kept the Jewish law (Torah), and honored traditional values.

The modern era, starting with the Enlightenment in the early eighteenth century, transformed Jewish life in dramatic ways. In the mid-1700s, most European Jews had been living in ghettos for centuries, either forcibly restricted to live in the Jewish quarter of cities or in the vast Russian/Polish countryside ghetto known as the Pale of Settlement (and

depicted in the film *Fiddler on the Roof*). As the Enlightenment swept through Europe, governments started emancipating their Jewish populations, freeing them from the ghettos, and enabling them to enter professions, universities, and general society like never before. With this newfound freedom and social mobility, many Jews began to see acculturation and involvement in Gentile society at large as the means to move up the social ladder and have a better quality of life. Maintaining traditional Jewish religion and customs posed many practical obstacles in achieving this goal. Thus, there radiated from Germany and Western Europe a new way of Jewish life: Reform Judaism, which attempted to modernize Judaism by denying or changing aspects of the old ways to fit modern sensibilities.

The *Haskalah* (the Jewish Enlightenment, which comes from the Hebrew word *sekhel* or sense, reason, or intellect) swept through European Jewish society throughout the eighteenth century. The examples of Jewish “progress” in Western Europe posed a cautionary tale for traditional Jews in Russia and Eastern Europe, serving as prime examples of forbidden assimilation into Gentile society, and the abandonment of Torah.

In response, the Yiddish-speaking Jewish people of Eastern Europe began denouncing Reform Judaism for its rationalism and departure from Torah. In addition, to protect their communities from the spread of the Enlightenment, the Eastern European rabbis forbade innovations or changes to religious practice and lifestyle. By freezing their practice into pre-Haskalah forms, the Haredim were born. They described themselves with a Hebrew word that announces that they “tremble at the word of God,” as opposed to (and in their estimation) Reform Jews, who neglected

the Judaism of their fathers. We often use the terms, “ultra-Orthodox” or “religious” Jews to describe this group as well.

Today, the major population centres of Haredi Jews are Israel (one million), the UK (with 40-50 million), and the greater New York City area (more than three hundred thousand). Within these large communities Jewish People have the freedom to rebuild what has been destroyed in the Holocaust. The Haredim see it as their moral duty to have large families in honor of those who perished. Therefore, the fertility rate for Haredi women in Israel is 6.9 children and 5.5 in New York. ¹

The ultra-Orthodox Jewish community is distinguished by their dress. Although each subgroup has its own conventions, in general, the men wear *yarmulke* (head covering) and *tzitzit* (the corner fringes mentioned in Deuteronomy 12:12 and Numbers 15:38 meant to evoke observance of the commandments). The Haredi men wear long black coats and hats year-round while the women wear long sleeves and long skirts, as they believe women should dress modestly. The men usually let their *peyot* (sidecurls) grow long according to their interpretation of not cutting the corners of one’s beard, although some tuck them behind their ears (Leviticus 19:27). The men can often be seen briskly walking to the *shul* (synagogue) for the thrice-daily prayers, which last for roughly forty-five minutes. The women stay home and care for the children who are sent to Jewish private schools to learn the Hebrew Bible and the Talmud. Many Haredim speak Yiddish at home. ²

Very few Haredim have televisions in the home, and some do not use smart phones because of the temptations they pose to worldly and foreign thought. Many may use computers for business, far less for pleasure, and most install Haredi-produced Internet blockers to protect from outside influences. Very few attend secular universities since non-Jewish studies are modern distractions from Jewish practice and are potentially dangerous. More than anything, Haredim want to focus on rebuilding a flourishing Jewish society centred on religious study and practice.

Haredi Jews are among the most unreached people groups in the entire

BY CHARLOTTE MACHADO

world. Many Jewish people have emotional and spiritual barriers set up against the message of Yeshua, but with the Haredim, the barriers are multiplied. With the Haredim, we have linguistic barriers, dress barriers, barriers of mysticism, in-grown communities, and barriers of education and modernity. If a Haredi Jew comes to faith in Yeshua, he or she is expelled from the community, most likely divorced and separated from their children and workplace. Even so, merely communicating the gospel to the Haredim is one of the most significant obstacles. Our highly successful Internet evangelism campaigns cannot reach a Haredi community that shuns the use of the Internet. Street evangelism teams and door-door missionaries are often run out of the neighbourhood. Evangelistic materials in the mail are immediately thrown away. Service projects by outsiders are shunned since the community takes care of their own.

Our mission to the Jewish People has been sharing the gospel with ultra-Orthodox Jewish people since our beginning in 1894. Our founder, Leopold Cohn grew up in a Haredi home in Hungary. We continue to have a deep burden for the Haredim to know Yeshua as their Messiah.

Would you pray for the salvation of the Haredim, and for the work of Chosen People Ministries as we intensify our efforts to understand and interact with them? Pray for our missionaries who are around Haredi Jewish people. Our staff needs courage, creativity, and divine appointments. Pray for the perseverance and protection of Haredi secret believers who are following Yeshua in silence while hoping for ways to save their non-believing families. Above all, pray that the name of Jesus may be magnified in the hearts of the Haredim, and that the Lord's remnant of Haredi Jews will expand with a mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Living and studying in Brooklyn at the Feinberg Center—the Chosen People Ministries graduate studies program sponsored by the Talbot School of Theology—afforded me many opportunities to observe, and sometimes participate in, the lives of religious Jewish women. After all, who else shops for clothes, groceries, and gets their nails done in the middle of the day? I chuckle at the bits and pieces of conversation I overheard: “I’m good, Baruch HaShem, you Rivki?,” or “My husband says I shouldn’t spend so much money on things we only buy for the guests,” or “Shayna that skirt looks too boxy, I think you should go for an A-line....”

When a baby girl is brought into the world, she is introduced to the community by a public naming ceremony, while a boy has the rite of circumcision on the eighth day. From that time on, the little girl is taught how to be an exceptional homemaker and mother. Young girls are also taught to read and understand Hebrew, Jewish history, and classic Jewish religious literature. The traditional Jewish woman wears modest, feminine clothes, and married women will often wear wigs or scarves over their hair. These vary based on style, observance, and socio-economic level.



Marriages are usually arranged by a *Shadchan* (matchmaker) and by mutual agreement of the parents. By the time a young woman is eighteen or so, she is married, and usually children come shortly thereafter. It is not uncommon for a woman to have school-age children by the time she is thirty, and sometimes by her early forties, she is already a grandmother! With this emphasis on family and childrearing, it can be difficult for women in these communities who marry late, who have difficulty conceiving, who experience divorce, become widowed, or who feel like they don’t fit the mold and expectations of their communities. Sometimes these mothers have children with disabilities, and like many other American families, they struggle in the same ways.

What are the implications for Jewish evangelism? Jewish women are well versed in the Hebrew Scriptures, as it is considered their special domain. Considerable emphasis is also placed on the Talmud, but extra-biblical texts are studied more by men. This is an unintended blessing, as religious women can draw closer to the Scriptures than their husbands, fathers, and sons!

Also, women are excused from “time dependent commandments,” which means that they do not have to run off to the synagogue at an exact time to pray in a prescribed way. Women are more likely to have a personal relationship with God as they sing and encourage their hearts through the Psalms and as they go about their day caring for children and keeping a kosher home. These religious Jewish women hold the future in their hands. According to the most recent surveys of the Jewish community, especially by the Pew organization, the high birth rate among traditional Jewish families means that in one or two generations Orthodox Jewish people will make up one third of the Jewish population!¹ These women are raising the next generation of the Jewish people. How appropriate that our Feinberg Center is located in the heart of Orthodox Jewish Brooklyn.

Please pray for these precious women. Also, it seems that there is a new movement within the ultra-Orthodox Jewish community as some women are beginning to work outside the home and are also asking for a greater role in synagogue life. This is causing some tension within the ultra-religious Jewish community. It is our hope that these trends might be used by God to inspire religious Jewish women to go even further by starting to consider the possibility that Jesus is the Jewish Messiah.

1 <https://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Haredi-population-tops-one-million-521515>, http://jppi.org.il/uploads/Haredi_Demography_The_United_States_and_the_United_Kingdom.pdf

2 Yiddish is a language that was spoken by Jewish people in pre-Holocaust Europe and is a combination of German and Hebrew dialects. It is still spoken today mainly in the U.S., Israel, and Russia.

1 <http://www.pewforum.org/2015/08/26/a-portrait-of-american-orthodox-jews/#>



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