



CJF Ministries

P.O. Box 345
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"God has not forgotten the Jewish people, and neither have we."

IT'S A MIRACLE!

December 2009

Dear Friend,

In December, both the Jewish people and their Gentile neighbors celebrate miracles. Hanukkah, or the Feast of Dedication, recalls the miracle of the lamps during the rededication of the Temple in Maccabean times. It's a holiday that even Yeshua himself celebrated (John 10:22). While Jewish people celebrate Hanukkah, most Gentiles will commemorate the miracle of the Incarnation—when God himself took human form as a baby in Bethlehem.

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Besides the Incarnation, the Bible records many other miracles. Remember, for example, when Simon Peter and his partners had fished all night and caught nothing? Jesus told them to “. . . Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a catch” (Luke 5:4). Although Peter's professional instincts told him that such an exercise was futile, he nonetheless did as Jesus bid. The miraculous catch of fish was so huge that the nets broke and Peter needed additional manpower to gather it all in.



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As an experienced fisherman, Peter recognized what a miracle this was. Frankly, it left him dumbfounded—and more than a little frightened. So why did Yeshua choose to perform this particular miracle? Was it to assure Peter that He could provide financially? Or, to repay Peter for the use of his boat? Perhaps it was simply to confirm the Lord's authority over all creation. It didn't make Peter wealthy. If you remember the account, Peter didn't immediately rush his bountiful catch of fish to market. Rather, he and his partners (Andrew, James, and John) left their nets, forsook everything, and followed Jesus to become fishers of men. I wonder if Peter thought back to this miracle on the day of Pentecost, when his sermon brought thousands into the net of faith.

We experience a miracle every day at CJFM. Like Peter, there are times when we labor diligently and toil all night, but return with empty nets. But at other times—often in the most unlikely places—we find fish in our nets. Sometimes we don't even have to cast the net—the fish jump into the boat of their own accord! In our nets we find Jewish “fish,” Arab fish, Palestinian fish, young fish, old fish, and fish of every denominational stripe. And like Peter's draught of fish, every fish in the net is there because the Lord put him there. Every new believer is a miracle from God's hand.

We rejoice over each and every soul that finds its way into our net. But there are still many fish in the sea—many who have not yet heard that Yeshua loves them and died for them. As another new year approaches, we are more determined than ever to cast our nets into the deep—proclaiming the love of God that is found in His son, the Messiah. However, we also realize that our ministry would not be possible without your faithful prayers and generous support. You are truly our partners in this endeavor. You provide the resources we need—the boats and the nets, if you will—and then undergird our work with your prayers. Friend, we simply couldn't do it without you!

Only eternity will accurately reveal the number of lives affected and blessed by your love and faithfulness. But let me assure you—we at CJFM have been affected—and greatly blessed. Thank you, dear friend. And may our Lord richly bless you during this holiday season and in the new year to come!

Your brother,

Gary Hedrick



2009 NEWS HIGHLIGHTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

The Christian Jew Foundation began in 1948 when Charles Halff—a young Jewish man from San Antonio, Texas—came to faith in Yeshua. Charles began sharing his story with churches, and then over the airwaves from one tiny radio station. Today, more than 60 years later, CJF Ministries (CJFM) has representatives throughout the United States and in seven foreign countries. Our 15-minute radio program “Messianic Perspectives” can be heard Monday through Friday on more than 30 stations and over the Internet. Our mission remains the same: proclaim the Gospel to the Jewish people, educate the Church about the Jewish roots of her faith, and equip believers to spread the Gospel.

Rarely will a Jewish person receive the Gospel the first time he or she hears it. Long-held perceptions and misconceptions require time to overcome. Patience and much perseverance are therefore needed by our representatives. CJFM workers have learned to patiently allow God to work through friendships and daily conversations. Even so, years may go by before a Jewish person is ready to believe. Such was the case with our own Rabbi Joseph. This orthodox rabbi struggled for three years—resisting, opposing, questioning, and returning repeatedly to the Scriptures. Finally, God’s truth broke through and Joseph accepted Yeshua as his Messiah. Today, like the Apostle Paul, Rabbi Joseph has forsaken a potentially lucrative lifestyle to follow Yeshua and become a fisher of men.

Building relationships is essential, but the work of evangelism includes much more than simply knowing the Scriptures and cultivating friendships. Here are some highlights of our international work:

Argentina

A severe outbreak of the H1N1 virus challenged the creativity of our workers this year. Attendance at regular meetings and Bible studies lagged as the nation cancelled public gatherings, and discouraged meetings. Unable to care for their flocks in person, Marcos and Deborah Morales (who work in the Mendoza area) and Guillermo Sedaca (who is headquartered in Buenos Aires), made good use of computer tools—typing, printing, and mailing copies of their sermons and Bible studies, as well as keeping in touch via email and Skype. Despite the threat of flu, the Mendoza congregation continued to grow, adding members from all age groups.



“Grandpa” Guillermo

Like many of our messianic congregations around the world, Shabbat services attract both saved and unsaved Jewish people—as well as Gentiles who love Israel. As if shepherding his congregation weren’t enough, Marcos regularly records additional broadcasts for his Spanish-language radio program, and has developed a study of future events based on the Book of Revelation. He also facilitates weekly prayer meetings in the city, and monthly Bible studies in a home far outside downtown Mendoza. Another part of Marcos’s routine are monthly visits to shut-ins. Pastor Morales expects the computer to be useful even after the flu epidemic has run its course. He is therefore praying for his own dedicated laptop so he will not have to schedule time for his ministry work on his teenage daughters’ outdated desktop.

Guillermo Sedaca, our other Argentine worker, serves in the Buenos Aires area. This year, he became a grandfather for the first time, and a second grandchild quickly followed. Since Guillermo has such a love for children, God often sends him to minister to, and pray for little ones and their parents. Like Marcos, Guillermo used computer technology to great advantage during the country’s swine flu outbreak. Because he has chronic asthma, Guillermo needed to take special care with his own health during the epidemic. He chose to keep in touch via Skype whenever possible, and used texting, email, and of course that ancient tool—the telephone. But he is especially looking forward to Hanukkah this year. Earlier in 2009 he met the director of a Jewish mission organization, and together they are planning a special December Hanukkah celebration. Guillermo believes that it will be well-attended by the many unsaved Jewish people who joined in his Passover Seder earlier this year.

Belarus

This year, CJFM initiated a major reorganization of our efforts in Belarus, beginning a new partnership with the Union of Evangelical Christian-Baptist Churches. Working together with this large, established faith body has permitted us to minister more freely. We have also avoided the government harassment and persecution that often plagues minority faiths. Through the Baptist Union’s membership, God has given us theologically sound men with a heart for Jewish ministry. Our partnership is already bearing fruit. Over the summer, we cosponsored a conference entitled “Israel: Past, Present, and Future.” The conference—attended by more than 200 pastors, their wives, and other interested Belarus believers—provided impetus and inspiration to those interested in sharing the Gospel with the Jewish people. God is now multiplying our efforts there many times over—and providing many workers for the harvest. In the coming year, you will hear much more about our work in this part of the world.

France

Although in semi-retirement, Jacques Guggenheim remains active on behalf of the Gospel. This past summer, as he does each year, Jacques trained participants for Paris’s annual Jewish evangelism campaign. After one week of training, team members took to the streets with tracts, prepared to share the Gospel with Jewish people. There is much work to be done in France. Pray that the Lord will provide another worker to undertake this ministry.

Israel

CJFM hosts three different tours to the Holy Land every year (see cjfm.org/tours for details). During each tour, participants have an opportunity to hear a short presentation from some of our workers in Israel. The Book of Revelation tour members recently heard the exciting news that God is at work not only among the Jewish people of Israel, but also among the Arabs. Given the degree of hostility that normally exists between these two ethnic groups, such news is nothing short of miraculous. Another positive is the growing cooperation between Jewish and Arab believers in Israel.

That cooperation is most notably evident in the annual Jewish/Arab believer “Gathering in Galilee.” Every year, Yossi Ovadia is actively involved in this Fall gathering. The yearly picnic brings together Jewish and Arab believers from congregations throughout the region to promote fellowship and give visible witness to the unity of all believers in Yeshua. As the keynote speaker at this year’s gathering, Yossi encouraged participants to “gather treasures



Pastor Yossi Ovadia

in Heaven,” using Matthew 6:19-33 as his text. There is an incredible sense of unity among the believers, despite the very real differences between them.

Yossi’s congregation in Karmiel not only celebrated their 20th anniversary this year, but recently had the privilege of planting another church in the Jezreel Valley. As usually happens in such a case, however, trained leadership and faithful members move from one congregation to the other, leaving holes in the sending congregation. Please pray that both the new fellowship and Yossi’s congregation will have all their needs met—including the need for a newer, more reliable van. The Karmiel congregation’s current van breaks down regularly and is no longer cost effective to repair. This van is used for numerous activities, including transporting people to Bible studies and Shabbat services (no buses run on Shabbat in Israel, and many people do not have a car). The van is also needed for traveling to baptisms, transporting the youth to camp and other outings, as well as delivering tables, chairs, and other equipment to outdoor meetings and picnics.



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“I will make you fishers of men.”

We also ask your prayers for two older teens from Yossi’s congregation. These young believers go out each week to witness at the central bus station, speaking primarily with young Israeli soldiers. This takes no small amount of courage as messianic Jews in Israel are often treated as pariahs, and are targeted for harassment and even violence. Pray for their safety, and that they may see fruit from their labors.

To the northwest of Karmiel, we find our sister Ruth and the growing congregation there. After her husband Albert’s sudden death in January 2007, Ruth unexpectedly found her ministry expanding: along with serving the messianic congregation that meets in her home, her ministry now includes working with Arabs and Palestinians! It’s an amazing turn of events that this Jewish widow never could have imagined. She regularly interacts with an Arab pastor in Haifa, accepting speaking engagements together with him on behalf of their individual ministries.

The diverse congregation that meets in Ruth’s home is testimony to the warm welcome Ruth offers everyone. Among the regular attendees you will find believing and non-believing Jewish people, Gentiles from a number of countries, and at least one Arab! At any given Shabbat service or midweek Bible study, you will hear people speaking Hebrew, English, German, Russian, Spanish, Dutch, and Arabic. The fellowship continues to grow despite the leadership void left by Albert’s death. A number of local pastors and Bible teachers have alternated preaching and teaching responsibilities. Their messages have been excellent, but the congregation clearly needs its own permanent shepherd.

Other Messianic News from Israel

After more than a year and a half, police have finally made an arrest in the case of Ami Ortiz, the young Israeli believer who last year opened a Purim basket containing a bomb. The admitted perpetrator is an ultra-orthodox Jew (a transplanted American) who is also responsible for a number of other violent crimes—both in the United States and in Israel.

Some messianic believers have opted to suffer injustice quietly, while others have taken their cases before the Israeli courts. At stake in an earlier case is the right of Jewish believers to be safe in their person and property, and to worship freely according to the dictates of their consciences. Four years ago, the messianic



congregation *Nachalat Yeshua* was overrun by between 500 to 1,000 protestors and rioters. They had been spurred on by the city’s Sephardic Rabbi Yehuda Deri and the anti-missionary group *Yad L’Achim*.

Rioters entered *Nachalat’s* place of worship, overturned furniture, and assaulted congregation members. It took local police three hours to quell the riot, and Howard Bass, pastor of the Beersheva congregation, was not even given the opportunity to press charges. As in the case of Ami Ortiz, local police seem to favor the ultra-orthodox in clear disregard of Israeli law. Charges were eventually filed against Rabbi Deri and *Yad L’Achim*. The case went to trial earlier this year, and a verdict is expected soon.