



**CELEBRATE
MESSIAH**

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Volume 23 Issue 1

*In Partnership with Chosen
People Global Ministries*

SERVING OUR HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS



INSIDE: Reaching Holocaust Survivors • Local Survivor Stories • Good News in Brief

REACHING HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS

Shalom and blessings to you. I trust that this newsletter finds you well and close to the Lord as we begin the New Year 2017. May God truly bless you abundantly this year! We are also believing God for a blessed and fruitful year ahead, as we reach out to Jewish people here in Australia and around the world.

Have you ever seen the movie *Schindler's List*? It is a true story of a Czech-born businessman, Oskar Schindler, who tried to make his fortune during the Second World War by exploiting cheap Jewish labour. Having started as a hard-nosed opportunist businessman, he ended up without any money but having saved over 1,200 Polish Jews from being transported to Auschwitz and certain death.

In a very poignant scene towards the end of the movie when Schindler is saying goodbye to "his Jews," he becomes deeply remorseful and emotional lamenting that he didn't do enough; if only he hadn't wasted so much money, if only he had sold more property, if only he had given more money for bribes, he could have saved more Jews from certain death.

It is a deeply moving scene that has always remained with me; and that is how I am feeling now in regards to reaching out to Jewish Holocaust survivors. If we don't do it now, it will very soon be too late.

This year, Your Mission to the Jewish People, will focus more attention on reaching out to our precious Holocaust survivors, both here in Australia and in Israel as well. Did you know that Melbourne has the highest number of Holocaust survivors per capita than any other city in the world outside Israel? We know we have to do more NOW to reach these beautiful people than ever before.

Here in Melbourne, we have a very special outreach to elderly Jewish people through the work of *Dom Missi'ee* (House of the Messiah), our Russian-speaking ministry to Jewish people. Most of these very precious people are Holocaust survivors, having not only endured and survived the hell of the Nazi death machine, but who have also survived persecution as Jews in the former USSR. (See page 6 for the stories of two precious local survivors, Basia and Klaudia.)

I can't tell you how moved I am when I see over 60 of these elderly Jewish people praising God and declaring their faith in Yeshua the Messiah at the services that we hold for them on a regular basis.

In our English-speaking congregation, Beit HaMashiach, we also have a beautiful Dutch Holocaust survivor whose

name is Netty Tepe. Netty's testimony has appeared in previous newsletters, but we now have a video of her testimony online for you to view at www.celebratemesiah.com.au/personal-stories. Please take the time to view Netty's inspiring testimony of how she found hope and love through Israel's Messiah.

Yet, so much more needs to be done to reach Holocaust survivors here in Australia as well as in Israel. In this newsletter, I would like to introduce you to the amazing work that is being done in Israel in reaching these precious Jewish people with the Good News of Yeshua our Messiah.

Holocaust Survivors in Israel

Holocaust survivors in Israel number about 200,000, with an average age of around 85. By one means or another, these brave souls made their way to Israel over the past 68 years. Many of them immigrated to the Holy Land during the last two decades from various parts of the former Soviet Union. These Holocaust survivors are now passing away at the rate of about 30,000 per year, and we cannot wait one more moment to present the Good News of eternal deliverance to these precious people.

Your Mission to the Jewish People, Celebrate Messiah in partnership with Chosen People Global Ministries, lovingly serves this community of Holocaust survivors in Israel in a variety of ways. First of all, we try to help them with practical concerns: food, clothing, repairing and cleaning their apartments, and much more. We spend time with them – taking them on trips so they can get out of the house, helping them celebrate the Jewish holidays. Most of all we try to counter their loneliness by investing our time to sit by their side, to listen to them reminisce, and enjoy wonderful moments of conversation about the deeper matters of life.

Of course, in the midst of developing these wonderful relationships, the conversations naturally lead to discussions about God, everlasting life, and ultimate deliverance, as each one of these elderly Holocaust survivors are watching their friends pass away each and every week. They are grappling with the meaning of their own lives, and even at this late age, are more open than they ever were before to the message of the Gospel. And the conversations about Yeshua happen so naturally – flowing from the loving relationships our staff have developed over the years between themselves and these dear people.

Incredible Stories of Deliverance

I have had many conversations myself over the years with the Holocaust survivors about the ways in which God delivered them from certain death at the hands of the Nazis. Some fled just moments before they were going to be taken away and sent to a concentration camp and, until today, cannot figure out how their timing was so perfect. Others, were about to be shot and guards were distracted and somehow they ran into the woods and were saved by Gentile families who took them in and hid them from the Nazis.

As I have listened to story after story, it is so clear to me and to the survivors, that God reached down from heaven and saved them from death. Naturally, recognising this leads to the question, "Why do you believe God saved you?" Many, of course, even feel guilty about being saved, but understand, as they face the end of their lives, that God must have had a plan for them and that their deliverance was no coincidence.

It took several years of investment in their lives before the doors were open to having deeper spiritual conversations and before some of these precious Holocaust survivors began giving their lives to the Lord. But it is happening. Our ministry staff have prayed with over a dozen Holocaust survivors to receive Yeshua as their Savior in the land of Israel. In addition, our sister ministries are having similar experiences as we see a small movement among these beautiful souls who are embracing their ultimate Deliverer and Messiah: Yeshua.

It is impossible not to be moved by the stories of these Holocaust survivors. I hope that you will appreciate the incredible testimonies in this newsletter and get a chance to view the online testimonies as well.

Holocaust Survivors Are Seeking the Lord

Many of these precious people are in process; they were raised as atheists in Eastern Europe, but are now in Israel or here in Australia. As they get older and older, they are ready to begin seeking and talking about faith and what their future holds.

You can be involved with these precious survivors through your prayers! But, time is running out! Clearly, in less than a decade most of the Holocaust survivors will no longer be with us.

So please pray for us and as God enables you, please continue to support the work of Celebrate Messiah in 2017. All our missionaries working in Israel, Russia and here in Australia, depend upon your generosity to make ends meet so they can serve the precious people God has entrusted to them for ministry.

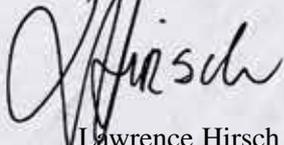
May God bless you, and thank you so much for your prayers and support and for being part of our Celebrate Messiah family. Please pray for us that this year we will be able to do more to share the Gospel with Jewish Holocaust Survivors and others.

We believe the best is yet to come, as Jewish people are becoming more open to the Lord and as we draw closer to that great day when the Jewish people as a nation will turn to the Messiah and embrace Him as Lord.

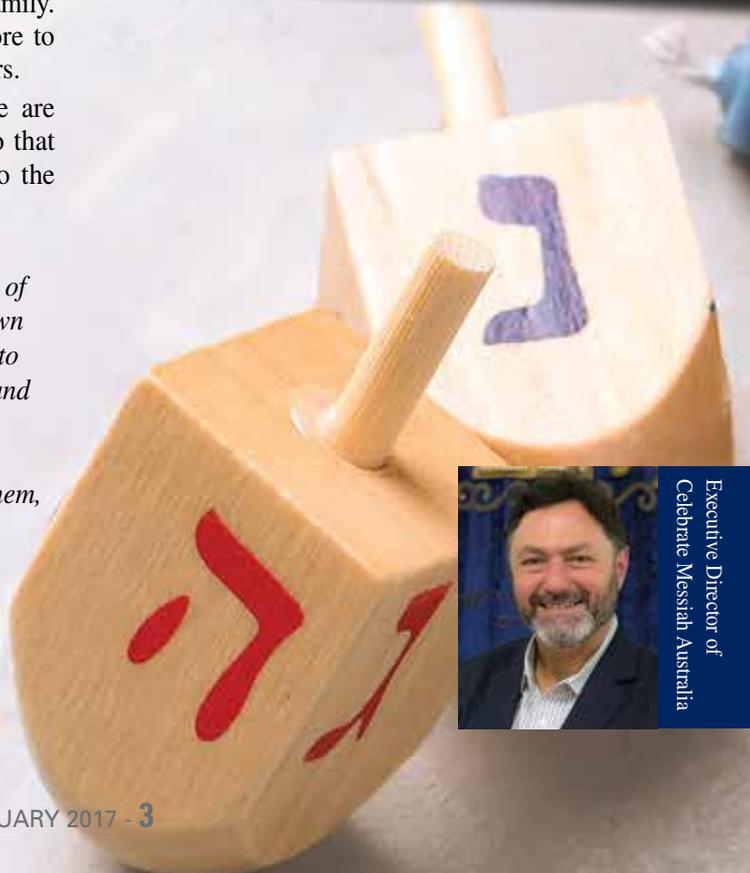
As the Jewish apostle writes,

For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery — so that you will not be wise in your own estimation — that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; and so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, "The Deliverer will come from Zion, He will remove ungodliness from Jacob." This is my covenant with them, when I take away their sins. (Romans 11:25-27)

Your brother in the Messiah,



Lawrence Hirsch
Executive Director, Celebrate Messiah



Executive Director of
Celebrate Messiah Australia

Our dedicated worker, Maxim, who heads up the ministry to the Holocaust survivors, met Esfir ten years ago. He shared the Gospel with her, as did many of our volunteers who came to her home to serve her in various ways over the years. Each time someone came and visited with her, a new seed was planted in her heart. Eventually, Esfir began praying and reading her Bible. Gradually she came to see the truth of the Scriptures and now professes faith in Yeshua! It was the patient, faithful witness of our staff and volunteers who ministered to Esfir, and the gentle voice of the Holy Spirit that eventually led her to repentance and accepting the gift of salvation through Jesus, the Jewish Messiah.

Tell us a little about yourself. Where did you come from and what have you gone through?

My name is Esfir Gershtman. I came from the town Artemovsk in the Donetsk region. I was born there and lived there for some time before the War. When the War began, some of my relatives fled. Some were evacuated and my mother stayed behind with my father's parents. They were very old, and my mother could not leave them. They did not have anybody else since my father was shot to death in 1939 when I was only 6 months old.

On the first day when the Germans came, they shot my grandpa and grandma to death and took my mother to a work camp. Mom was taking me with her everywhere all the time as I was only 4 and a half years old. It happened that my mom and I were in the ghetto all of that time when she was taken. She was sent to work in Kostantinovsk in Donetsk region. After the work camp, she was buried alive in the alabaster quarry in Artemovsk.

I was brought to the Gestapo office. We all were lined up and marched to a forest. Only later did we understand that they brought us there because there was already a pit with dead people in it. It was still some 200 or 300 meters to the pit when the firing started. Because the road was in the forest, the firing was both from the forest and the air. We all panicked. Then some strange old lady grabbed my arm and we fled through the forest. Not only did we, but others also, those who had managed to flee. Others were shot to death. We spent some days in the forest; I was scared, cold, and hungry. We came to some village, and we were given food there. Tell me, what kind of food do you think you could get in a village in 1942? A piece of a potato and wheat bread was a luxury. From there we went to Artemovsk again.

I could not walk the streets so I was put in the basement. I would go for a walk in the night and during the day I would sit in the basement, because if I had walked openly I would have certainly been taken. But the old lady to whom I was brought was obviously a wise



woman. I had dark curly hair when I was little, so she took me to the church, baptized me and told me that I was Armenian, and she gave me her last name.

The house where I lived was bombed and everything was burned. I was left with nothing. Then, three women, our neighbors, came to the city council to witness whose child I was. I got a birth certificate and learned who I was. I went to work in 1955, I graduated in 1956, then I moved to Konstantinovka which is close to Artemovsk. I am an obstetrician and went to work at the maternity hospital. After I had worked there for 15 years I became in charge of the first-aid post in the village. I got married, moved to Konstantinovka and stayed there. I have 2 children, a son and a daughter. My husband died of a stroke in 1985. It is a long and scary story. We were half starving, so we decided to pack up and move to Israel in 1996.

And you came to Sderot?

No, first I came to Holon, Israel. I lived there two weeks, but the apartment there cost 500 shekels. I could not afford that. I had a friend here in Sderot from Konstantinovka so I called her and asked her what I should do, that I cannot pay 500 shekels. She said, "Do you want to come to Sderot?" I said I want to go anywhere. So here I am now.

Tell us about Sderot.

I have been leading the Club of Holocaust and Ghetto Survivors here in Sderot for 16 years already. We have mostly younger ones, the 80 to 90 year olds. A 92, 93, and 98 year old have died recently. These are my people, very old and sick, but whenever we have some events I say do not give up, cheer up! In spite of it all!

There were times when we had up to 60 Qassam rockets fired at our city. We could not go out to buy bread – we were sitting in our apartments. By the way, there is a bomb shelter in every apartment. We were absolutely quiet. We did not leave our houses, but the organization [Chosen People Ministries Israel] that Maxim represents and Michael Zinn, they help us. There are some other guys: Zhenya, Misha, and others. God bless them! Despite everything they brought a huge truck of food. We got

AN INTERVIEW WITH ESFIR

scared and told them to leave! You cannot be here! They stopped in our yard. They took food to those who lived closer and brought by car to those who lived further. We were afraid that they might get into something terrible. It was the most intense, "hot" operation. This organization really helps us a lot.

Not only do they help with the monthly food packages, they help with such things as cleaning my apartment. The people here are very old, sick, people. Just recently we had amazing young people come! They helped to clean! Yet it is not all that this organization does. They organize tours, different events; of course, they are the ones to cover the cost. Thank you very much! Last year we even were at the Dead Sea for the whole week. One can name many things that they do. It is of course an amazing work! I pray that everything goes fine and we continue to partner with them. We have worked with them for many years; they know us all and we know them. All of them are simply wonderful!

What does Chosen People Ministries mean to you spiritually?

I would like to say thank you very much to all of your helpers and volunteers. They do such great things! You know, sometimes you can do it in an ordinary way but sometimes - putting all your soul into it. They really put their soul into it. You see, it is not only about material things. It is also about the conversations that we have during fellowship where I learn more about God.

I can only say Baruch HaShem! Praise the Lord! We say Baruch HaShem in the morning and in the evening: in the morning - for waking up, and in the evening - for having lived another day. Praise the Lord, the fridge is full, I have an apartment. I need to thank many times God and the providence that we are here in our state!

Many people for many centuries wanted to destroy us, the Jewish people, but they did not succeed and they will not succeed. And a thousand thanks to you, alfei todot, toda raba, thank you for all your care that you provide for us! Many, many thanks to you.

▼ Visit our website
[www.celebratemessiah.com.au/
personal-stories](http://www.celebratemessiah.com.au/personal-stories) to read about
how our own Netty Tepe
survived the Holocaust
and watch a video of her
moving testimony.



God sustains survivors through extreme hardship ■ LOCAL STORIES

BASIA was born in Bobruisk, Belarus in a family of three children and a mother and a father. On 26 June 1941, only four days after the war started, her family were running for their lives as bombs were falling behind them. They managed to jump on a train headed for Chelyabinsk near the Ural Mountains. The family continued to live there for four years. The father joined the Russian army. They experienced hunger, very hard conditions with temperatures



of minus 40 degrees. Basia remembers as a young girl the terribly harsh climate of Russia, with whirlpools of cold winds, snow and blizzard, and clothes that weren't suitable for those conditions. She often thought that she would freeze alive as she walked. Her mother died in tragic circumstances; it seems that she was pushed by someone while travelling on the tram. She fell under the wheels of the tram and died instantly. In 1945, Basia and her two siblings returned home where they were joined by their father. In hindsight, Basia understood that it was almighty God that sustained them and took care of them. Basia is now aged 91 and her husband is 92.



The car with the German soldiers went past and didn't bother to stop. She lay there for some time and started dreaming about her grandmother. In the dream she heard her grandmother telling her to get up as otherwise she would freeze to death. She woke up and quickly stood up and started walking towards the school. God preserved and sustained Klaudia and her mother while in the care of this wonderful Christian woman who had sacrificed and endangered her life and that of her children by letting them live with them. When the war finished, Klaudia and her mother had a very close relationship with that woman and her family. To this day Klaudia manages to help the woman's children financially. Klaudia has been a believer in Yeshua for the last 15 years and she has been attending Dom Missi'ee Messianic Congregation.

"She often thought that she would freeze alive as she walked."

They regularly attend the services at Dom Missi'ee Messianic Congregation in Melbourne and have both accepted Yeshua as their Lord and Saviour.

KLAUDIA and her mum, Dora, lived in Odessa, Ukraine. When the war erupted they went running into the neighbouring village in order to hide away from Nazis. One Christian lady who had two children of her own who lived in a school took them in, and was able to hide them. The woman managed to cut an archway over which a rug was hung for them to hide behind. Klaudia and her mum lived behind that rug and as there was no room they would be forced to stand there from 6 o'clock in the morning until 9



Celebrate Messiah's Russian ministry team leader Rita will head up a mission team to Far East Russia in March to continue to develop the ministry there. Please consider a donation to Celebrate Messiah so we can continue this and other vital, local work. Please contact us if you feel called to help.



Celebrate Messiah's Russian ministry team leader, Rita, (second from left) with some members of the Dom Missi'ee ministry team.

NEWS BRIEFS

FILIPINO LOVE GAINS RESPECT

Jewish sages say, “Who is the wise person? One who learns from every person”. This may well have been the inspiration for Malka who overheard Barry speaking with a Filipino Christian couple in a local burger restaurant about their respective ministry work with Jewish people. From the next table, Malka turned to Barry and said, “Did you know that during the Second World War the President of the Philippines saved 1200 Jewish people from extermination?” Malka shared that she was a Polish Jewish woman aged 82, and had been a tour guide in the Auschwitz and Treblinka extermination camps. She spoke of her family: two sons who are both lawyers, and that she was not religious. She admired the Filipino couple who clearly had a love and respect for Israel and the Jewish people. They spoke to her about how their faith in the Jewish Messiah changed their hearts and gave them new hope. She then turned to Barry and asked how he fitted into to all of this. He said he was a Jewish believer in Jesus, and that she would be welcome to come to a service at Beit HaMashiach Messianic Congregation. She replied “I know who you are”, and that her friend for many years had been trying to get her to come. Finally Malka said: “Because I have met you, I will come.” Please pray for Malka.

JESUS HEALS HEARTS OF SURVIVORS

Maxim travelled with his wife from Israel to Germany to visit churches and messianic congregations and to run holiday camps for children. They met up with a couple, H & G, who are Holocaust survivors, and had given their hearts to Jesus in one of Maxim’s past ministry visits. Since then they have been attending a local congregation for three years, were both baptised and love God with all their hearts. H was sharing his testimony and Maxim was preaching in the churches. But most importantly, they saw Germany and German people with different eyes as believers in Jesus. Their faith helps them to forgive all the hurt and pain they have carried for the whole of their lives. On the Shabbat, they spoke in a local congregation to Jewish people who lived there. Their hope was that God would use them, so the

eyes of the Jewish people would open and they would see the true Messiah and saviour, Jesus.

AGNOSTIC RESPONDS TO LOVE

New outreach worker Moishe has a fellow Jewish close friend David* who identifies as an agnostic. Since working in ministry, Moishe and David have had many conversations about issues of faith and God, and Moishe has been able to explain what Messianic Jews believe. David recently accepted an invitation to a Shabbat service at Beit HaMashiach, and was very impressed, especially by the outpouring of love for the Jewish people and Israel. This impression has resulted in David speaking about Celebrate Messiah’s ministry positively among other Jewish people within their friendship group. Please pray that David will come to know Yeshua in a personal, heartfelt way.

GOD CONTROLS REMOTE ENCOUNTERS

When Yael visited a small church in a tiny country town in a remote part of southern Australia to present on the Messiah in the Passover, she didn’t expect to find any Jewish people in attendance. But miracle of miracles, on the Friday night two Jewish men attended – one a believer and the other not yet. They had never met each other before. A God appointment if ever there was one!

DIVINE APPOINTMENT AT 35,000 FEET

Chosen People Ministries president Dr Mitch Glaser travels often, and on a recent trip he had an encounter on a plane to London. During the flight, he met an ultra-Orthodox Jewish man who was originally from the New York area and they had a great conversation about Jewish life, their families, politics and even sports. Finally, as it often happens, the gentleman asked Mitch what he did for a living. Upon hearing that Mitch was the president of a Messianic ministry, the gentleman said that he knew of a congregation in the Golder’s Green section of London – a very Orthodox Jewish neighborhood. Over the next half-hour, they spoke about why Jesus is the Messiah of Israel. Praise God with us for allowing Mitch to speak with such an open-hearted religious Jewish man about Jesus.



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Jewish Heritage Tour to Spain and Israel

Including the 100th Anniversary
of the Light Horse Brigade

with Barry Buirski
18 October - 6 November 2017

It will be a trip of a lifetime.

A wonderful and exhilarating tour of the Holy Land that will transform your life, deepen your faith and open the Bible to you in new and exciting ways; exploring the Jewish Roots of the Christian faith. How Spanish Jews suffered religious persecution and what lessons this holds for today. One highlight will be a recreated charge at Beersheba with up to 100 riders.

FEATURING

SPAIN – Barcelona, Madrid, Cordoba
ISRAEL - Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, Galilee, Beersheba

For details call Inner Faith Travel on TOLL FREE
1800 074 426 OR (61) 07 5530 2900.

Or call our office on 03 9563 5544 or email
barry@celebratemessiah.com.au

SAVE THE DATES

Community Passover Events

Sydney Saturday 8 April
Gold Coast Sunday 9 April
Canberra Monday 10 April
Melbourne Tuesday 11 April



Simcha



Simcha 2016 was one of the best and most successful national messianic conferences that Celebrate Messiah has ever held in Australia. The conference, over the last weekend in November featured special guest speakers Avner and Rachel Boskey, who explored the theme, Streams of the Negev, from Isaiah 35:6:

"Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue will shout for joy. Water will gush forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert."

This theme is also explored in Psalm 126:

*"Restore our fortunes, O Lord,
like streams in the Negev!"*

These scriptures point to the restoration of Israel, and the return of the Nation, as a people, to their God.



Celebrate Messiah executive director Lawrence Hirsch described the weekend as, "...once again, a dynamic, community and identity building event that made a positive contribution to the messianic movement in Australia."

Audio recordings from Simcha 2016 are available on USB (\$30) and CD (\$35), and also on video on USB or DVDs (\$55). To order, please contact our office on 03 9563 5544.



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"BRINGING THE MESSAGE TO THE ORIGINAL MESSENGERS"

Serving together with Chosen People Ministries in: Argentina • Australia • Baltic States • Canada • Finland • France • Germany • Hong Kong • Hungary • Israel • Netherlands • New Zealand • Poland • Russia • South Africa • Ukraine • United Kingdom

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