



Celebrate **MESSIAH**

Volume 16 Issue 2, July 2010
In Partnership with
Chosen People Global Ministries

SEARCHING FOR NEW LIFE IN THE NEW AGE

Bringing the Gospel to New Age Seekers • Foreign "Gods" in the Promised Land? • From New Age to New Creation • Mission Report from Russia

New Age Teaching or New Life in Messiah?

Dear friend,

Shalom and blessings to you in Messiah. It gives me great joy to let you know what God is doing amongst Jewish people in Australia, New Zealand and around the world through the ministry of Celebrate Messiah in partnership with Chosen People Ministries. I am still really excited about what God

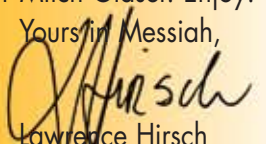
did in the hearts of many Jewish people during our most recent ministry trip to the Far East of Russia, Siberia and the Urals. I hope you enjoy

reading the report on page 6 and give thanks to God for the salvation of so many Jewish people.

I am sure you will also very interested to know what is being done to bring the Message of Messiah to young Israelis who have been enticed by the New Age Movement. Your mission to the Jewish people is sharing the message of New Life to Israelis in Israel, India, New Zealand and Australia. The Lord is giving us some wonderful opportunities to reach a whole new generation of Jewish seekers! We have found a hunger for spiritual truth growing among young people in particular—but their search is taking them down some winding roads!

The following article is written by the President of Chosen People Ministries, Dr Mitch Glaser. Enjoy!

Yours in Messiah,


Lawrence Hirsch
Executive Director of
Celebrate Messiah



Before I received Jesus as my Messiah, I tried all sorts of religions and philosophies, including various “mystical” versions of the Judaism in which I was raised. Like many other young people at the time, I also became enamored with Eastern religions and assorted New Age philosophies—but none of them satisfied my longing for a personal relationship with God.

Today, young Jewish people are even more attracted to this style of spirituality than they were in my day! This is why I am so deeply concerned about the vast numbers of Jewish people who are becoming involved in what is commonly termed the “New Age” movement. This increasing interest among sincere but misguided seekers makes it imperative that we try to develop ways to reach them. I want to tell you what we are doing so you can pray for us!

An Attractive Counterfeit

As I entered my teenage years, I became a rebel. I did not want anyone—parents, teachers or rabbis—telling me what to do or what to believe. The music, availability of drugs and pressure from peers to reject the values of our parents set the stage for a significant number of young people to chart a new “spiritual” course for our generation. The only problem was, we did not have a map!

What were we looking for? Where were we going? Actually, no one knew! I definitely wanted a deeper spirituality, but I did not know where to find it. I was searching for something beyond the dusty dogmas of traditional religion. “Eastern thought,” as we called it back then, proved to be very attractive. These new philosophies offered—and still offer—a “feel-good” salvation without “religious” and especially “Christian” baggage for the average Jewish person! After all, who ever heard of a Hindu or a Buddhist accused of being antisemitic? Remember, in the Jewish mindset, Christianity is unfortunately associated with anti-Jewish sentiments. So Eastern and other exotic faiths seem to be safer for young Jewish seekers.

Tens of thousands of Jewish people are now involved in the New Age movement, and we want to reach them for the Lord. So many are honestly seeking a deeper and more vital faith, but they simply do not know where to look. And like I did, they want a DEEPER spirituality



without the stigma usually attached to Christianity and to Jesus by the Jewish community!

Creating God in Our Own Image

The New Age movement generally teaches that truth is relative. This is very appealing to members of our younger generation, who have

approach in reaching New Age seekers, especially Jewish people who need to be slowly introduced to Jesus and His teachings before they will give their hearts to Him.

Hope for New Age Seekers

I want to tell you what your Mission to the Jewish people is doing

formal religion—neither Judaism nor Christianity. They want something they believe will be authentic and life-changing!

These young people want genuine spiritual peace. My heart breaks because I know they will never find what they are looking for until they encounter the living Lord and surrender to Him. For those who do,



been raised in a pluralistic, post-modern culture. But the truth is that all religions are not valid paths to God. In New Age thinking, all that matters is that a person is well-intentioned and sincere! However, we know that in the spiritual realm, there is good and evil, right and wrong, truth and error.

This makes the exclusivity of the Gospel (John 14:6) a difficult truth for young people—and even for many from my generation—to accept. Some might want to believe that Christianity is God's best without believing that other faiths—like Judaism, Hinduism, Islam and Buddhism—are not! Some spiritual seekers try to combine as many faiths as possible into a New Age potpourri that cannot possibly lead to complete spiritual satisfaction.

Many Jewish young people are attracted to the teachings of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, for example. When I was first considering Jesus, I was so impressed by those words of the Savior! Ultimately it took the persuasion of the Spirit of God to help me understand that there was no other name given among men whereby we must be saved—and that name is Yeshua, Jesus!

Our continued gentle presentation of the person of Jesus is a powerful

to reach Jewish New Age seekers across the globe—especially in Israel!

Each year, tens of thousands of people attend New Age festivals around the world. These festivals are particularly popular in Israel, and the vast majority of those attending are young people. Israelis involved with the New Age movement often begin learning about these forms of spirituality as they travel around the world after serving in the army. Many travel to India, Thailand and other spots where they learn about these “alternative” paths to God. They then bring these views back home, which explains why there are now at least three New Age festivals each year in Israel.

Our workers in Israel attend these festivals to share the Gospel with these precious young seekers. Earlier this year, we sent a team to India and to New Zealand to reach the thousands of Jewish young people who are seeking a more satisfying spirituality. In New Zealand, Scott Brown works with Celebrate Messiah in reaching the more than 8,000 Israeli backpackers that travel around that beautiful country each year.

What do these seekers want? So many are longing for a deeper and more intimate relationship with God. They do not want the usual diet of

their New Age seeking will have been a step along the way. But for those who remain in the seductive grip of New Age philosophy, it will become an almost unbreakable bondage.

May I encourage you to share the Gospel with New Age seekers? So many are open to the Lord, but are simply misguided. Many have never even heard the Gospel! I know that sometimes listening to what these folks believe will be difficult—but love them, open your heart, and smile when you can. Then, with the gentleness of Jesus, tell them where they can find what they are looking for. In Jesus they will find all the treasures of God—everything they had looked for and never found elsewhere.

The answer to the seeking heart is not a philosophy, but a Person: Yeshua.

I hope our reports on what God is doing in the lives of Jewish people who have come to faith from a New Age background will brighten your day and strengthen your resolve to bring the Gospel to both Jews and Gentiles.

Thanks for your prayers and generous support! Our staff could not be reaching Jewish people around the world for Jesus without you!

— by Dr Mitch Glaser

BRINGING THE GOSPEL TO NEW AGE SEEKERS

– by Scott Brown

Tranquilizers and pain suppressants work by numbing the senses and masking the pain long enough to give one a momentary sense of relief. The New Age movement and related philosophies work in much the same way. They mask the problem of sin long enough to give their followers a false sense of peace and serenity. While the New Age movement may promise enlightenment, in the end the payoff is darkness.

Why are Jewish people so drawn to this movement? One New Age community reported that almost 40% of its membership is Jewish. Over 21% of the participants in a study of ex-members of cults are Jewish. God's unique relationship with the Jewish people seems to have planted in the Jewish soul a passion for things spiritual. But when this passion is misdirected, Jewish people become

being dogmatic without compromising your convictions. Break down walls by humbly admitting that you do not understand the secret things of God. Cultivate the gentle art of simple listening and gracious responding (Col. 4:6).

Use evil for good (Gen. 50:20) –

New Age philosophies all contain counterfeit elements of the truth. For example, enlightenment, transformation, and contentment are common terms in the language of the New Age that have profound relevance to our Gospel message. You can communicate the message of your King using words that are meaningful to your hearer. The Apostle Paul deliberately used elements of the pagan cultures he addressed as bridges to truth.

Highlight your shared values (Acts 22:3) –

Chances are good that your Jewish friend is exploring this path because of an earnest hunger for spirituality. That is something you also desire, right? Do not be afraid to express your own passion for growth as a spiritual person. You can begin the conversation in general terms that will invite—not alienate—your friend.

Suffer peacefully (1 Peter 3:15) –

The New Age and Eastern religions promise to deliver peace and contentment in turbulent times through “being at one with a force within.” It is a compelling promise that delivers—but only momentarily and superficially. A person's deepest needs remain unfulfilled. So do not be surprised when God delivers an opportunity for *you* to demonstrate hope in a hopeless situation, and “be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.” Your hope will quietly challenge your friend's confidence in crystals and mantras.

Kindly ignore apparent confidence (1 Cor. 1:20) –

Despite your friend's glowing reports of spiritual transformation and inner peace, the truth remains that his or her spirit yearns for the life that only Yeshua (Jesus) can provide. Remember that the Holy Spirit is faithfully convincing your friend of his or her sin problem, and desperate need for righteousness and of the coming judgment (John 16:8). Speak to the person behind the veil of self-confidence and remember: “*God has chosen the weak things of the world [us!] to put to shame the things which are mighty*” (1 Cor. 1:27).

Scott Brown and his wife Margie serve with Celebrate Messiah in New Zealand, where they reach out to young Israelis and other international travelers who often travel abroad in search of spiritual truth.



Our staff members go where seekers gather, whether at festivals like the one held in April in Israel (above) or in the Goa region of India (right).



especially vulnerable to the old lies of the New Age. Here are some suggestions for reaching out to Jewish friends and relatives who are attracted to or involved in the New Age:

Make room for mystery (Deut. 29:29) –

Jewish fascination with “signs” (1 Cor. 1:22) contributes to the high percentage of Jewish involvement in the mystical disciplines. Add to this the mounting intolerance for religious dogma and the result is a general abhorrence for organized religion. As an ambassador for Messiah (2 Cor. 5:20), you can avoid

FROM NEW AGE TO NEW CREATION

The Spiritual Journey of Alan Shore

The first tug toward New Age thought I ever experienced was at about the age of sixteen, when I encountered the writings of Herman Hesse. *Siddhartha*, a book about the search for Eastern “enlightenment,” was very popular at the time, and it set me on a path that whetted my appetite for spiritual experiences. I steeped myself in Eastern thought, did yoga and tried meditation in an attempt to penetrate the inner mysteries I was convinced lay in store for me.

New Age thinking is powerfully attractive. Who doesn’t want to be a better person, be more successful, have fulfilling relationships and all the rest? That’s what New Age thinking and philosophy promises. The problem is that it feeds human pride, luring you with the idea that you are better than other people because you have found a way into a secret, “enlightened” circle. When I became a believer in Jesus, I realized that this sort of elitism is the very opposite of the Gospel, which is available to anyone who is humble enough to receive it. I am always reminded of this when I read Paul’s words, *“Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men”* (1 Cor. 1:25).

Even more to the point are Messiah’s words in Matthew 16:26—*“For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?”* Although New Age thought promises fulfillment, it cannot meet our deepest need—the need for fellowship with Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God who alone is capable of transforming hearts and renewing minds.



FOREIGN “GODS” IN THE PROMISED LAND?

How do the words “Israel” and “New Age” fit together? Although you may think that the Israeli people hold closely to the Jewish faith, that’s not always true. Let me explain a recent phenomenon occurring in Israel.

Every young Israeli spends a number of years of mandatory service in the Israeli army, whether in elite fighting units, social work or other areas. When they finish their military service, many spend the next three to twelve months traveling the world, often going to South America, Asia or India. It is said that Israel issues 50,000 visas to India every year. Sadly, many young Israelis get swept up in the drugs, rave and party scene and the idolatrous worship of India’s many gods.

When these young travelers return to Israel, they often bring their “New Age” faith with them. Many claim that it makes them feel peaceful in the midst of the daily struggles of life in Israel. As a result, during three major biblical feasts (*Rosh Hashanah* [New Year], *Passover* and *Shavuot* [Pentecost]), some 30,000 people participate in New Age festivals. Instead of giving thanks to the God of Israel for His provision, freedom and mercy, they pray to foreign gods and consume things that are harmful to their bodies and minds.

Yet these precious young people are still searching. As we reach out during these festivals, I have had some of the most amazing conversations about the God of Israel, the truth of the Scriptures and the atonement that Jesus made for us. These young people are starving for answers that they have not found in the things they have adopted from foreign lands. Although they are profoundly lost and involved in unhealthy activities, their questions tell me they are still searching for the truth that is found in Jesus!

Rachel G. serves with Chosen People Ministries in Israel, reaching Israelis and helping to coordinate short-term missions programs in the Promised Land.



Alan Shore is Staff Writer for Chosen People Ministries and also represents the ministry in churches, Messianic congregations and learning institutions. He is also presently working on a Ph.D. in Jewish History and Culture in Berkeley, California.

RUSSIA MISSION REPORT



— by Lawrence Hirsch

In September 2004 Celebrate Messiah pioneered an outreach to the “forgotten Jews of the Far East of Russia” with the main thrust of the work in the Jewish Autonomous Region in the city of Birobidzhan. Today we have seen God bless this ministry beyond our expectations and eight messianic outreaches have been established across the Far East Russia region including parts of Siberia. We now work in partnership with Chosen People Ministries across Russia to reach the Jewish people in this great land.

This mission trip from the 16-27th of May was undertaken to further the work of Celebrate Messiah in the Far East of Russia, Siberia and also the Urals. The goal of our mission work in Russia is to share the Good News of Messiah with our Jewish people who are often scattered in remote areas and in small communities. We genuinely care for the welfare of our people in these often impoverished regions and we seek to do what we can minister to their needs both spiritually and practically.

The pattern of ministry that we follow is “to the Jew first and also to the Gentile” (Rom. 1:16). In each of the 6 cities that we visited we sought to reach out to Jewish people first and then encouraged local churches and Christians to continue to love and reach out to Jewish people in their localities. We were encouraged to see how God has His people reaching

out to his Chosen People in Russia.

For the sake of the protection of the on-going work in Russia I have to be careful on what I report about, but I can say that over the 11 days we saw more than 23 Jewish

people pray to receive Yeshua as Saviour and Messiah. We had several extraordinary opportunities to address groups of Jewish people right within Jewish community centres. On two occasions, in two different cities, we had the privilege of leading a group of Jewish people in a prayer to receive Yeshua as Messiah. This kind of opportunity is absolutely unique as we witnessed God soften the hearts of Jewish people to Messiah. To see and hear our Jewish brothers and sisters pray to receive Yeshua as Saviour and Messiah was incredible. One by one God is grafting the broken off branches into their own Olive Tree.

On one such occasion, as Rita Ivenskis was leading a group of Jewish people in prayer to receive the Lord, I noticed one man in particular. He had a beautiful smile on his face as he closed his eyes and repeated the words of the prayer. We found out later that he was an accomplished surgeon and that it was his birthday that day. We chatted to him and he told us that he loved the prayer and that he had prayed it from his heart. He asked Rita to write the prayer on a piece of paper as he wanted all his patients in hospital to say this prayer while they were under his care. Wow, this was not only physical birthday, but his spiritual



birthday also. Pray for this man as he is now leading others to know the saving power of the Messiah.

On another occasion we met a group of elderly Jewish persons at a Jewish community centre. Their choir entertained us with some wonderful Yiddish and Russian songs and they were very warm and hospitable. Again we had the opportunity to share our trust in the Messiah and again during our time of sharing, Rita led them in a prayer of repentance and faith. One of the beautiful Jewish ladies we met that day was a Holocaust survivor. She had fled from Poland into Russia as a young eighteen year old girl and then was transported by cattle train by the Russians to Siberia. When I first met her I could see that she has a spark in her spirit. She was so keen to hear what we had to say that day and God ignited her heart and she prayed to receive the Lord with such joy and delight, as did several others.

The work that we established in Birobidzhan in the Jewish Autonomous Region in 2004 has continued to develop and through some amazing circumstances has taken on a unique dimension. Again I cannot say too much at this stage but I will ask you to pray for the incredible opportunity that God has given us in Birobidzhan to make a significant impact on the Jewish people of this region. Over the past six years, since we have established the work in Birobidzhan our work has made a difference in the lives of many Jewish people in the region. A



NEWS BRIEFS

BEIT HATIKVAH ON THE SUNSHINE COAST

Celebrate Messiah has helped plant a messianic congregation on the Sunshine Coast called Beit HaTikvah. The congregation meets on a fortnightly basis and is made up of both Jewish and Gentile believers in Yeshua who are committed to sharing the Goodnews of Messiah with Jewish people, Israeli backpackers and others who are spiritually seeking. Please pray for the leadership team of this vibrant yet fledgling congregation and as they grow in their fellowship and witness for Messiah Yeshua.


HAVDALAH OUTREACH IN SYDNEY

Once a month Celebrate Messiah has been running a well-attended purposeful outreach at the end of the Sabbath that has been greatly enjoyed by a core group of believers. This fellowship is designed as an outreach to Jewish people and this year we have seen two Jewish people come to faith in Messiah. Please pray that as this fellowship grows that we will be able to open this ministry to the public and move to more regular services.

BEIT HAMASHIACH IN MELBOURNE

The congregation of Beit HaMashiach (House of Messiah) is strategically located in the heart of the Jewish community of Melbourne. Recently a visiting music team was preparing to lead the worship for a Shabbat service. A Jewish lady walking by at the time heard the beautiful music and being intrigued and attracted by the singing ventured in to find out what it was all about. In chatting to several folk at Beit HaMashiach she was truly amazed to discover that the congregation was made up of Jews and Gentiles who believed that Yeshua (Jesus) was the Messiah. She seemed very relaxed and comfortable and expressed an openness to find out more. Please pray for this lovely Jewish lady that God would continue to draw her close to himself.

A Russian Jewish member of Beit HaMashiach had been witnessing to a Russian Jewish friend of hers for some time before inviting her to a praise and worship night held at the congregation during the week. This Russian Jewish lady enjoyed it so much that she came a second time and during the meeting she expressed a desire to accept Yeshua as Lord. Everyone gathered around her as she was led in a prayer to receive Yeshua as Messiah amidst much rejoicing both in the congregation and in heaven.



messianic community called Club Simcha has continued to provide fellowship and teaching for the many Jews who have come to faith in Messiah. Over the years, several Jewish believers have been baptised.

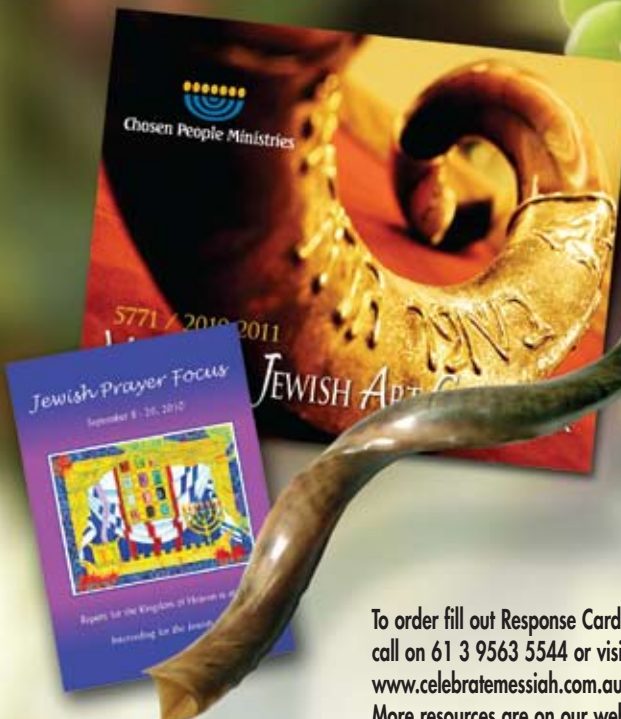
In due course, I hope to be able to let you know more details of the current opportunities presented to us in Birobidzhan as we reach out to the “forgotten Jews” of this region.

This mission trip brought us face to face with Jewish people who were hungry for the good news of Messiah. This mission was certainly on the coalface of Jewish ministry in Russia. At this stage it is certainly a grassroots move of God amongst Jewish people.

Your ongoing support and prayers for this vital work in Russia is much needed and appreciated. As more Jewish people come to faith in Russia, we will need to do more to disciple new believers, train up new leaders and develop Messianic Jewish communities. I am happy to let you know that as we work hand in hand with our partner ministry, Chosen People Ministries, we are getting the work done step by step.

The spirit of Communism still looms large over the people, keeping many in spiritual blindness. But the Spirit of the Lord is moving across the land of Russia setting people free. God is pouring his Spirit out over Jewish people across Russia and grafting them back into their own Olive Tree.





HOLIDAY MESSIANIC RESOURCES

Twisted Yemenite Shofar Medium 30"-35" This is a beautiful shofar imported from Israel.

Shofar • au\$135

Order your copy of our **Messianic Jewish Art Calendar** for September 2010 to December 2011. Each month will greet you with a breathtaking photo of a different aspect of Jewish life, a relevant word of Scripture and an encouraging thought about Messiah's promise to His people. They make great gifts, so don't forget to order extras!

Messianic Jewish Art Calendar • au\$20

New **Jewish Prayer Focus** now available. This is a wonderful resource to inform you about each of the three Jewish High Holidays coming up in September and also a Prayer Guide to help you pray for the Jewish People during the 21 days of these festivals.

Book • au\$6

To order fill out Response Card, call on 61 3 9563 5544 or visit us online at www.celebratemessiah.com.au. More resources are on our website.

Feast of Tabernacles

Celebrate Messiah's annual Feast of Tabernacles Celebration is a unique worship experience bringing together people of various ethnic backgrounds including Jewish and Arabic believers in Jesus.



Special guest speaker
Dr Kameel Majdali.

MELBOURNE

Saturday 25 September at 10.30am at
Beit HaMashiach Messianic Congregation, 206
Bambra Rd, Caulfield South, Victoria

Entrance is free. For more info
visit www.celebratemessiah.com.au
or call our office on 03 9563 5544

Simcha

2010

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Simcha NZ Conferences

Auckland / 13 November 2010

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For more information on Simcha Conferences in New Zealand,
please call +64 3431 2564 or email scottssode@gmail.com



Celebrate MESSIAH "Bringing the Message to the Original Messengers"

Serving together with Chosen People Ministries in: Argentina, Australia, Canada, China, England, France, Germany, Israel, Mexico, New Zealand, Russia, Ukraine, United States.

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