



**CELEBRATE  
MESSIAH**

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*In Partnership with Chosen  
People Global Ministries*

# WHO ARE THE HAREDIM?



## MINISTRY TO THE ULTRA-ORTHODOX

WHO ARE THE HAREDIM? | THE WOMEN OF ORTHODOX  
JEWISH MELBOURNE | MESSIANIC CENTRE UPDATE

# AN UNREACHED PEOPLE GROUP



Lawrence Hirsch  
Executive Director of  
Celebrate Messiah

Dear friend,

Shalom in the name of our Messiah Yeshua.

Louise and I had the pleasure of taking 80 fellow Aussies to Israel to join our partner Chosen People Ministries to host 600 fellow believers for a tour, a Bible conference, and a glorious celebration of Israel's 70th anniversary. The fellowship was wonderful and so many of us had good opportunities to share the gospel with both Jewish Israelis and lots

of Arab Muslims as well.

We 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 50 survivors join us for dinner one 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 to dedicate an upcoming newsletter to our work in Israel, especially as we enter this 71st year of modern Israel's existence. All I can say is that there are many more Jewish believers in Yeshua in Israel today than probably since the 1st 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 50 *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: The Last Frontier?*

If I asked you what group of Jewish people would become the largest group of Jewish people in the next 20 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. And this is true of the Jewish people as well. Already, most Jewish people do not regularly attend synagogue any more than non-Jews attend church. I cannot speak about Hindus or Buddhists but can only surmise that the more they live in the West, the more they will also become secularised.

Our world is quickly moving further and further away from the Creator, and this is especially true in North America, Europe and Australia. Yet, this is *not the whole story* according to those who study the Jewish community. In fact, it is predicted that the most identifiable group of Jewish people in the years ahead might actually be those who are identified as ultra-Orthodox, or what we call *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 traditional 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. There are a few hundred thousand of these folks in Brooklyn alone and about a million in Israel, with the majority in Jerusalem. In Australia we estimate around 5000-6000.

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 Yeshua, 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 Yeshua 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

## NEW FOCUSED OUTREACH TO THE HAREDIM



this past January. “On the Derekh” means “On the Path.” The conference was named as such since Haredi Jewish people place a high value on walking by the ways of God, and staying true to the Torah. When they are not, they often say they are “off the derekh.” So, we want to get them back on the derekh by coming to faith in Yeshua! 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 recognised 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! In John 14: 6, Yeshua says, “*I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*”

This week-long conference on reaching ultra-Orthodox Jewish people was held at the Charles Feinberg Brooklyn Messianic Center, which is in the heart of one of the key Orthodox Jewish areas of Brooklyn. CPM US President Dr Mitch Glaser gave a lecture on evangelistic work in the past, and his wife Zhava 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. There were also sessions on what is currently being done to reach these folks with the gospel, and many discussions on the development of strategies and new tools for evangelism.

About 50 people attended the training conference, and most were missionaries to the Jewish people from more than a dozen different ministries. They studied together, prayed, and discussed various strategies and ways to work together to reach this group with the Gospel. One of the high points of the conference was having an Orthodox rabbi speak to the group about the lifestyle of this unique community of Jewish people.

A prayer walk through the Orthodox areas of Brooklyn prompted short conversations with many, even about the Lord. It was a great time, and in the future a lot more will be done to reach this group for the Lord.

### What’s Next?

We are asking you and others to pray for God to raise up leaders with a heart for outreach among the Haredim. We are working toward creating resources to support those who leave the community. Last year, during the summer outreach, Shalom Brooklyn, more than 100 surveys were completed of Haredim on the streets of Brooklyn, and it was discovered that 12 percent said they had read at least parts of the New Testament. This is probably a higher percentage than we 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.

We are also experimenting 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 Yeshua to Haredi families. These things are always a good testimony. We also have a special burden for ultra-Orthodox Jewish women. The 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 mums 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 Yeshua. 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 for our staff and volunteers in Israel, and for those on the streets of Brooklyn who are sharing the gospel with the Haredim and many others. And here in Australia we are also thinking, praying, and planning about ways that we can connect with the Haredim.

We could not do this without your loving generosity and prayers.

Shalom in Yeshua’s name,

Lawrence

## Who are the Haredim?

BY BRIAN CRAWFORD

**H**aredim 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 19th 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 18th 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 modernise 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 18th 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 centre of Haredi Jews are Israel (one million) and the greater New York City area (more than three hundred thousand). In Australia, it is estimated that the Haredim make up around 4% of the total Jewish population, which would put their numbers at around 5000.<sup>1</sup> They are mostly centred in the Melbourne suburbs of Ripponlea and Caulfield. The freedom and large numbers of like-minded Jewish people in these areas allow the Haredim to rebuild what had 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.<sup>2</sup>

The ultra-Orthodox Jewish community is distinguished by their dress. Although each subgroup has its own conventions, in general, the men wear a *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.<sup>3</sup>

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 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-to-door missionaries are run out of the neighborhood. Evangelistic materials in the mail are thrown in the garbage before entering the home. Service projects by outsiders are shunned since the community takes care of their own.

Your 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. Here in Australia, Celebrate Messiah is educating staff and volunteers to better understand this community.

Would you pray for the salvation of the Haredim, and for the work of Chosen People Ministries and Celebrate Messiah as we intensify our efforts to understand and interact with them? Pray for our missionaries in Brooklyn, Israel and Caulfield who are around Haredi Jewish people every day. 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 Yeshua 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.

1. [https://arts.monash.edu/acjc/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2018/03/Gen17-Initial-Findings-report-ONLINE-version-final-22\\_3.pdf](https://arts.monash.edu/acjc/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2018/03/Gen17-Initial-Findings-report-ONLINE-version-final-22_3.pdf)
2. <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](http://jppi.org.il/uploads/Haredi_Demography_The_United_States_and_the_United_Kingdom.pdf)
3. 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.

## The Mothers, Wives, and Daughters of Orthodox Jewish Brooklyn

BY MIRIAM\*

Growing up in Jerusalem and Melbourne as a distant grand-niece of the Lubavitcher Rebbe M. M. Schneerson, afforded me many opportunities to observe, and sometimes participate in, the lives of my Orthodox Jewish aunts and cousins. 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 Orthodox Jewish woman wears modest, feminine clothes, and married women wear either wigs or headscarves over their hair. These vary depending on style, observance, and socio-economic status.

Marriages are usually arranged by a *Shadchan* (matchmaker) and by mutual agreement of the parents. By the time I was seventeen, my father had received three offers for marriage for his consideration on my behalf. Orthodox women tend to marry at a young age, and children follow shortly after. It is not uncommon for a woman to have school-aged children by the time she is thirty, and sometimes to be a grandmother by her early forties! 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 mould and expectations of their communities. Sometimes these mothers have children with disabilities, and experience the same struggles as many other Australian families.

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!

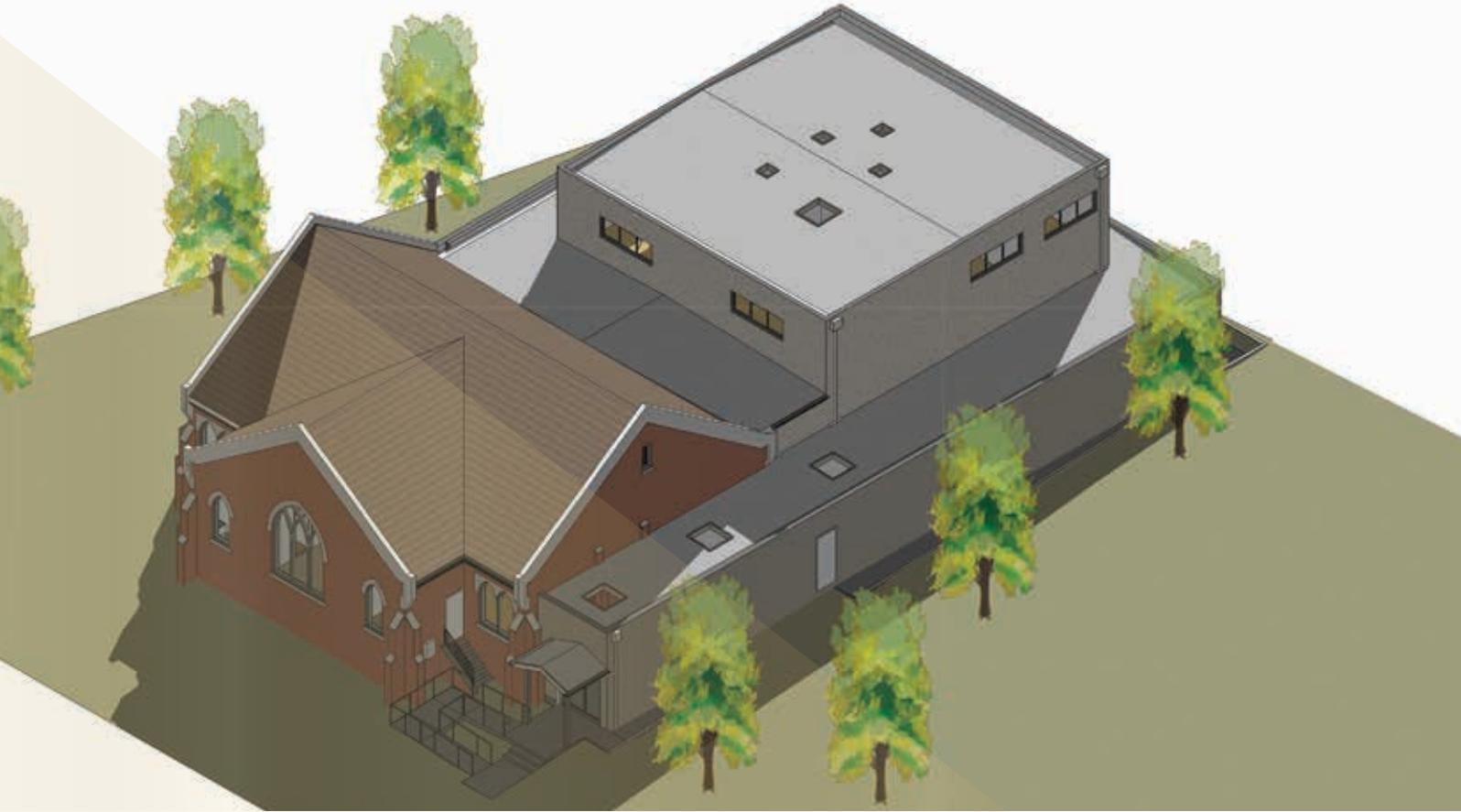
Also, unlike the men, women are excused from "time-dependent commandments," which are *mitzvot*, prayers or tasks which must be performed at certain times, days or seasons. The reason given is that they are thus shielded from accidental disobedience due to the constant demands of childrearing and housekeeping. Women are therefore freer to develop a more personal relationship with God: they may sing and encourage their hearts through the Psalms 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 a recent survey of the Jewish community in America by the Pew Research Centre, Orthodox Jews currently make up about 10% of the Jewish population. But this percentage is likely to treble in the next half-century due to the high birth rate among American Orthodox Jews<sup>1</sup>. There is no reason to expect a different statistical demographic in Australia. Orthodox Jewish women are raising an increasingly larger number of Jews. How appropriate that our Messianic Congregation *Beit Hamashiach* is located in the heart of Orthodox Jewish Caulfield!

Please pray for these precious women, their faithful engagement with Scripture, and relationship with God. Also, it seems that some women are beginning to ask for a greater role in synagogue life, and this is causing some tension within the Orthodox Jewish community. It is our hope that this trend might be used by God to inspire Orthodox Jewish women to go even further by starting to consider the possibility that Jesus is the Jewish Messiah.

\*Name has been changed.

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

# THE CENTURION'S LEGACY: THE CAULFIELD MESSIANIC CENTRE PROJECT



Many people think that we have already completed our building project to construct the first custom-built Messianic synagogue in the Southern Hemisphere. But this is not so!

In fact, we have not yet started construction of the *Caulfield Messianic Centre*.

I have been asked hundreds of times over the past 18 months, "When are we/you going to start?"

And for a while I was giving specific dates several months in advance. Just like religious zealots who put a date to Messiah's return, predicting a specific date is a recipe for Egg On Face.

It is true that most of the planning has been done, but for the past two years we have been refining the plans and in more recent months trying to ensure that we will end up with facilities that will service future generations. Importantly, that the construction will be done on time and on budget; we do not want to saddle future generations with debt. And most importantly, that we build a house that honours the Lord and is a beacon from which the Good News of Messiah Yeshua will go forth.

Our prudent Celebrate Messiah board has insisted that we have all the money required before we proceed. We do have most of the money from fundraising and from selling the old Church of Christ manse. However, we are around \$500,000 short of what we need to complete the building and do the fitout including furniture and equipment.

One major reason for the delays is that we have had various architects and designers come on to but leave the project for personal or organisational reasons. On top of this we have been dealing with at least 14 consultants from project managers,

designers, draftsmen, specialist engineers – structural, electrical, hydraulic, sound – interior design, lighting, landscaping, land surveyor, quantity surveyor, building surveyor, waste management. And then there's the proposed builder.

Whenever, changes have needed to be made, directions, plans and consultations have occurred between at least two and sometimes up to half a dozen consultants.

So, what seems like a rather small redevelopment project is actually quite a massive undertaking.

Inspiration for this project comes from the Book of Nehemiah, which describes his work in rebuilding Jerusalem during the Second Temple period.

*I told them how the hand of my God had been favourable to me and also about the king's words which he had spoken to me. Then they said, "Let us arise and build." So they put their hands to the good work. (Neh 2:18)*

We do believe that God has his hand on the whole undertaking, and it will be done in his time. Meanwhile, we are exercising great patience and trust in El Elyon, our Most High God, that the house we build will be His house that He entrusts to us.

It's with great joy and welcome responsibility that we will see this project through to completion.

Please pray with us!

*Mark*

on behalf of the Celebrate Messiah team

# NEWS BRIEFS

## CURIOSITY PROMPTS A DIVINE DROP IN

Two Jewish ladies were walking past Beit HaMashiach Messianic Congregation on the Shabbat of Sukkot and Linda, visiting from Scotland, was so curious to ask if they could look at our sukkah, a specially constructed booth representing the temporary shelter from the command in Leviticus 23:42. She asked who we were, and said she had just celebrated all the High Holy Day festivals at different locations around the world. Several of us explained we'd had an encounter with Yeshua, the Jewish Messiah, and she asked many questions, about what we believed and why. Please pray that Linda will continue her inquiries into the person of Yeshua.

## FACEBOOK FRIEND ACCEPTS STUDY REQUEST

The way Yeshua is reaching young millennial Jews today, is sometimes unique, and unexpected. After many months of friendship between a young Jewish staff member of Celebrate Messiah, Moshe, and an open minded young Jewish man David\*, the conversation gravitated more and more towards Judaism, the Messiah and Yeshua. Both Moshe and David are part of a Jewish facebook group in which Judaism is discussed. David commented to Moshe that "The one thing that speaks for Yeshua is how much mainstream Judaism and mainstream society loathe and hate him. Yeshua scored a lot of points with me when "Google Home Alexa" called him a fictional character." Moshe invited David to a regular weekly bible study, and he accepted. Please pray that David will have his eyes opened as they study the bible together, and that he would come to know and receive Yeshua.

## FILLED WITH PEACE IN WAIT FOR DENTIST

Everyday opportunities are all around us to share Messiah. A NSW Celebrate Messiah staff member was waiting for their turn in the dentist office. The

person seated next to them started to share how nervous they always were at the dentist, and asked what she did to cope. "I shared how trusting in Yeshua as my Messiah brings me peace. We had a really good discussion including looking at Isaiah 53 together. They accepted a copy of the Isaiah 53 Explained book just as I was called into the dentist!"

## SOWING THE SEEDS OF CONTENT FOR ISRAELI

During their time in Israel, Robert and Elly were able to catch up with five of the Israeli backpackers who had come through Canberra. They stayed with Yonit\* and her family, and had a wonderful time with them. Yonit shared that after she had visited Australia she had taken an elective on Christianity, and that she would like to read a Brit Chadasha (New Testament). They were able to get her a Hebrew/English version so that she could read in both. She was very thankful. "Most of the time we only sow the seeds, said Robert, "It is wonderful when we get to water as well; we are praying that her whole family would come to Yeshua."

## COFFEE STIMULATES CALL TO REPENTANCE

Rita met three Jewish Russian speaking ladies she'd known for more than 30 years and they had never invited her to have a coffee with them. But this day was different, and Rita knew that God was about to do something. She shared about coming to faith in Yeshua, and that her husband had also become a believer. She showed them a photo of them conducting a Passover presentation, and they were all amazed. She then asked those three ladies if they wanted to receive Yeshua as their Lord and Saviour and miraculously they all said "yes", without any hesitation. "The four of us held hands and they repeated after me a prayer inviting Yeshua into their lives." They asked Rita if they could meet up every Monday to have fellowship, and would also like a Bible, and to learn how to pray.



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## MESSIANIC RESOURCES



**Israel: The Land and the People** is a wonderful book with some of the best photos of Israel anywhere! Through 70 spectacular photos by Lawrence Hirsch, this coffee table book presents the beauty, history, culture and variety of the land from snow-topped

Mt. Hermon to the fortress of Masada, ancient Jerusalem, modern Tel Aviv, Jaffa and much, much more. A must before you visit Israel, a reminder afterward, and a perfect gift for anyone who wants to feel as if they've been there.

**Israel: The Land and the People..... \$25<sup>AUS</sup>**

Our newest 15-month **Messianic Jewish Art Calendar** for 2018-2019 features beautiful, thought-provoking images of Israel photographed by Linnea LeBreton. Volunteering in Jerusalem allowed her to see the Jewish roots of her faith, experience Israel on a personal level, and develop an undying passion to support Israel. Show your love for Israel when you purchase a calendar for yourself and more to give as gifts.

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## Tabernacles and the Mountains of Israel

# Tour

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