



## CELEBRATE MESSIAH

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# Executive Director's Mission REPORT

May 2019

Dear friend of Celebrate Messiah,

Shalom and blessings to you. It gives me great joy to be able to give you a current snapshot of what your mission to the Jewish People is up to at this time. I was recently personally so encouraged by the reports that I received from our missionaries in the field, that I wanted to share these exciting stories with you.



Lawrence and Louise Hirsch  
Executive Director,  
Celebrate Messiah

## PASSOVER SEASON

We've just completed a very busy and fruitful time of ministry and outreach during the Passover season. The rabbis call this time of year “The Season of our Redemption” and we are certainly praying that the many Jewish people who heard the Gospel through our presentations and banquets will respond positively. This year at our Passover Banquet at the St Kilda Town Hall we had about 15 Jewish people who were not-yet-believers come to the Seder. I know that they were personally touched by the Lord through reading

of the messianic Haggadah and the wonderful worship that we had. Please pray that the Holy Spirit will continue to water the seed that was sown.

## SIMCHA – A JOYOUS OCCASION

*Simcha* conference was hosted by Celebrate Messiah at the end of November 2018 year and last year was, as always, a joyous occasion. We had a total of 300 participants and our special guest speakers Wayne and Ann Hilsden from Israel were really wonderful. Wayne and Ann were co-founders of King of Kings Assembly in Israel and Wayne is the current Director of FIRM – Fellowship of Israel Related Ministries.

Wayne did a series of great messages exploring the theme of the conference; “The Restoration of All Things.” He is a very clear and dynamic communicator and everyone appreciated his messages. His messages can be downloaded free of charge from the resources section of our website [celebratemessiah.com.au](http://celebratemessiah.com.au)

Keep the date for *Simcha 2019*, which is set for Saturday 30 November 2019. More information will be forthcoming and available on our website.



photo by Carly Hennigen



## HISTORIC GATHERING OF YOUNG MESSIANIC JEWS IN ROME

Louise and I helped coordinate and facilitate *Muchan\** Rome from the 27<sup>th</sup> of December 2018 to the 2<sup>nd</sup> of January 2019 (\*means Ready). This is the fifth Muchan conference—an event held bi-annually around the world and sponsored by Chosen People Ministries USA. The conference idea was birthed when Louise and I visited the Auschwitz extermination camp in 2007.

*Muchan Rome* was possibly the largest gathering of messianic Jews in Rome since the second or third century. Quite amazing and historic! This year we had 153 young adults from 10 countries around the world. The theme of the conference was of course, the Book of Romans: “Ready to be Right.”

Muchan conferences have been strategic in helping to facilitate the growth and encouragement of young adult believers in the messianic movement. We believe that many of these young believers were positively impacted with the Gospel this year in Rome, and more READY than ever to go take the message of the Messiah to a needy world.

It is a real privilege to be involved with this ministry. Louise and I had opportunities to minister to many of the participants personally. Louise prayed and counselled several young women going through difficult times in their lives and she continues to keep in contact with them even now. We find that we are building relationships with young Israelis especially, and this helps also with the ministry we do in mentoring young leaders in Israel through the *Living Waters* retreats every year in June.

### PHOTOS ON THIS SPREAD:

Top: Muchan Rome group outside the Colosseum in Rome; Muchan conference in full swing; Opposite middle: Lawrence and Louise some of the participants of “On the Derekh”; Opposite bottom: Those who attended the LCJE Australasia Conference



## ON THE DEREKH CONFERENCE NEW YORK CITY

Rita Ivenskis, EM, Louise and I were invited to attend the second conference of its kind that is specifically focussed on reaching the *haredim* (the ultra-orthodox Jews). I know it might sound ridiculous but this was the first time in 29 years of ministry that we attended a conference specifically to begin a conversation and strategy to reach this growing but very “closed” community of Jews around the world.

The truth is that we know very little about these communities as they are completely closed off from the rest of the world. The word *haredim* is found in Isaiah 66:5 and is translated as “[one who] trembles” at the word of God. The *haredim* have their own dress code, food, language, education, medical and social care. We heard from one young man who had left his *haredi* community when he was about 20 years old. He wasn’t a believer in Yeshua but shared his story and experiences with the conference. He told us that when he left, he didn’t know how to speak English, he didn’t know anything of the outside world like history, geography and even mathematics. He

had to learn everything. He, and young men like him are only educated to be religious and study Judaism. He didn’t even have contact with other Jews outside of his own small community.

Needless to say, we learned a lot from this conference. We specially learned that we don’t know much, and that we need to have concentrated prayer to reach into this people group. Please pray with us specifically that the Lord will guide us moving forward. Australia has a large percentage of *haredim* and especially here in



Melbourne. For more info, watch the SBS documentary: *Strictly Jewish: The Secret World of Adass Israel*. We cannot be effective without prayer. Please pray!



## LCJE AUSTRALASIA

Towards the end of February our very own Mark Polonsky, who is the area coordinator of *LCJE Australasia*, hosted a conference for ministries and individuals involved in Jewish evangelism in Belgrave Heights, Melbourne. Some 40 plus people attended the conference.

The special guest speaker was Dr David Sedaca, Vice President of Chosen People Ministries USA. He did a very good job in presenting various talks ranging from *The Reliability of the Scriptures* from a Biblical Archaeology, *Understanding the Judaism that Jesus met*, and other encouraging messages

about Jewish evangelism. Participants enjoyed his wide range of experiences and academic studies.

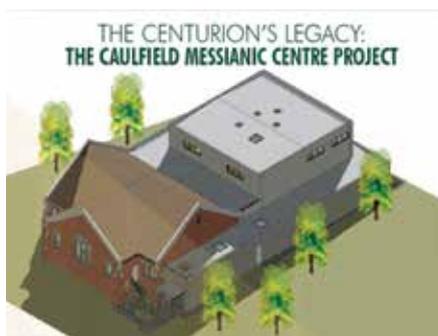
This was a very good conference (perhaps the best *LCJE* conference we’ve had) and I was very proud of the contribution of the members of Celebrate Messiah like Mark E and EM and many of our staff who presented or emceed the sessions. Eric, a young Jewish doctor who came to faith at *Beit HaMashiach* shared his testimony and Theresa Thomas from Celebrate Messiah New Zealand led the music. Celebrate Messiah is certainly the largest ministry amongst Jewish people in Australasia, and we are making a significant contribution to the cause of Jewish evangelism, which was clearly evident.

## UPDATE ON THE CAULFIELD MESSIANIC CENTRE REDEVELOPMENT

We are still hoping to be able to build the first purpose-built “messianic synagogue and ministry centre” in the Southern Hemisphere. However, the Celebrate Messiah Board has been very careful not to start this project until we know that we are able to complete it. We are still facing some challenges, and building has not commenced yet.

We still need to raise somewhere between \$300,000 - \$500,000 to be able to start and complete the project and we are continuing to trust the Lord for his blessing and provision.

Please pray about your support of this project. We are still praying that God would raise up “Centurions” all around Australia that will help build our synagogue (cf. Luke 7:1-6).



In the meantime we have actually vacated the old Bambra Road Church of Christ facility in anticipation of its redevelopment into the Caulfield Messianic Centre. We are waiting and trusting the Lord; “... *but they who wait for ADONAI will renew their strength. They will soar up with wings as eagles. They will run, and not grow weary. They will walk, and not be faint.*” (Isaiah 40:31, TLV)



### DOM MISSI'EE MESSIANIC CONGREGATION MELBOURNE

*Dom Missi'ee*\* conducts two services a month as an outreach to 25,000 plus Russian Jewish people in Melbourne (\*means House of Messiah). Most of the 60 or so Russian speaking Jews who attend *Dom Missi'ee* are Holocaust Survivors who have come to faith in Yeshua as the Messiah. Praise the Lord!

Each service we use taxis to bring these elderly folk to the services. They love the time of worship and preaching of God's word, followed by a time of prayer and a communal lunch. This ministry is led by Rita and Eliya Ivenskis together with a number of wonderful volunteers.

Rita reports: “I have been praying that the Lord would show me the fruit of my letters that I send out. I met a lady whose name is Lyudmila in a car park in Bentleigh and I have known her for the last 20 years. I have been sending letters to her for the last six years but she never attends the services. She told me that she couldn't come because she was minding her granddaughter but she was reading all those letters that I have been sending to her,



### BEIT HAMASHIACH: GROWING DESPITE MOVING

Despite having to move out of our normal facilities, the Lord has been blessing the ministry of *Beit HaMashiach* Messianic Congregation and *Dom Missi'ee* Russian speaking Messianic Congregation in Caulfield.

In the meantime, *Beit HaMashiach* has moved to an Anglican Church in Caulfield North. Despite the move and new surroundings, *Beit HaMashiach* is experiencing a growth in numbers. Average attendance this year so far has been around 195 people.

Even though *Beit HaMashiach* is strongly focussed on reaching Jewish people as our primary calling, we

think that the congregation may well be the most multi-ethnic gathering in Melbourne with about 35 different ethnicities in attendance.

Our first service is a traditional Hebrew prayer service, and the second, larger service is a contemporary messianic worship service.

If you would like to hear some of the sermons that are being delivered at *Beit HaMashiach*, please log in for free at [www.beithamashiach.com/resources](http://www.beithamashiach.com/resources). I am sure you will be encouraged by the sermon series that we do and the messages on the festivals that we have available online.



## THE SLEEPING GIANT OF JEWISH EVANGELISM

Scott Brown from Celebrate Messiah New Zealand calls ministry to Israeli backpackers “the sleeping giant of Jewish evangelism,” and I would agree with him. This year we have been seeing a greater number of Israeli backpackers coming to Australia and especially here to Melbourne. Louise and I have been hosting over a dozen or so Israelis during this summer as well

and she had put those letters into a special file that she read again and again. She prayed through all the prayers regarding Yeshua being the Jewish Messiah, and she believes in Him through those messages in those letters. That was very encouraging for me. Praise the Lord!

## BRIT CHADASHAH SYDNEY

Celebrate Messiah has planted a messianic fellowship in St Ives on the North Shore of Sydney that meets every fortnight with a regular attendance of about 40 people. As you may know, St Ives has a large Jewish community and we hope that this fellowship will provide a much-needed outreach to Jewish people in this area as well as a place of spiritual growth and messianic worship for the believers who attend.

The fellowship is run by Harry and Zelda Hamman and Celebrate Messiah missionary Paul Cohen, who is a very fine and experienced Bible teacher. Sermons are recorded and made available online at their website.

For more information on *Brit Chadashah*\* fellowship please see their new website at [www.britchadashah.com.au](http://www.britchadashah.com.au) (\*means New Covenant).



as many other hosts who are involved with Celebrate Messiah. With each one of these Israeli backpackers we usually have a significant opportunity to share the Gospel, and we have built some wonderful relationships. They often ask to come back and stay with us after they have travelled a bit more and before they return home.

Louise and I have recently purchased an old caravan that we have renovated into what we now call Zula Van. This has been a blessing, and we’ve hosted several Israelis in the van already. Zula means a comfortable place and it is named after the Zula Lodge, Celebrate Messiah New Zealand’s lodge in Wanaka (see special report on Zula Lodge).

This ministry of hosting Israeli backpackers is a growing opportunity here in Australia, and in the months ahead we hope to help stimulate and grow this ministry across Australia. Christians, living in any part of Australia that the Israelis visit, could get involved. We will keep you informed about this, and please pray for this ministry to grow across Australia.

### PHOTOS ON THIS SPREAD:

Opposite: *Beit Hamashiach* congregation in Melbourne; This page top: *Dom Missi’ee* Russian Congregation in Melbourne; Bottom: Members of Brit Chadashah Congregation in Sydney; Middle: The Zula Van to host Israeli travelers; Below: Hanukkah outreach in Canberra



## MESSIANIC JEWISH OUTREACH IN OUR NATION’S CAPITAL

Celebrate Messiah missionaries Robert and Eleanor Miles are doing a wonderful job in our nation’s capital Canberra. They planted a messianic congregation called *Hineh Yeshua* (Behold Yeshua) that meets each Friday night. Robert was recently ordained by the IAMCS (International Alliance of Messianic Congregations and Synagogues). Robert comments: “Many people have asked if I have felt differently after the ordination. In all honesty, I have. I have had the feeling of being settled in this role that Adonai has called me to. The sense of striving that I sometimes felt beforehand has been replaced with an assurance that I am exactly where Yeshua wants me.

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**PHOTOS ON THIS SPREAD:**

Middle below: Robert and Eleanor Miles with Lawrence; Bottom: collage of Purim celebration in Russia; Top: Baptism in Artyom Far East Russia; Opposite page bottom: Volunteers with Tikkun Olam in Melbourne; Top: Example of the Tikkun Olam bags and Hanukkah cards

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It is as though a piece of the puzzle has fallen into place and now fits.”

*Hineh Yeshua* runs regular Shabbat services and special outreaches during the Festivals (like Hanukkah – see photo on previous page). Robert and Eleanor reach out into the local Jewish community in various ways including hosting Israeli backpackers.

Please pray for this ministry in Canberra as they seek to reach out to be a light for Yeshua in the nation’s capital. For more information and to view their sermons that are posted onto YouTube find *Hineh Yeshua Congregation* on Facebook.



**GROWING OUTREACH TO THE “FORGOTTEN JEWS” OF FAR EAST RUSSIA**

The two congregations that we have planted in the Far East of Russia, *Dom Missi’ee* Birobidzhan and *Dom Missi’ee* Artyom, are growing and making an impact for the Lord in these remote regions despite challenges.

Eugene and Irina lead the congregation in Birobidzhan. Recently Irina lost her job and this represented a significant challenge as her income helped support them in the ministry. Eugene not only runs the congregation but also works part-time to support them.

At the same time there seems to have been a strong growth of the ministry amongst young children. Irina is now very busy doing pastoral care as well as children’s ministry. There are over 20 children coming on Tuesday nights to worship and have Bible study. The photo collage below is of their recent Purim celebrations.

As a mission, Celebrate Messiah has decided to increase our support for the ministry in Birobidzhan to help our

missionaries. Please pray with us that the Lord will provide all that is needed to keep up our monthly commitment to this amazing and difficult work in the heart of the Jewish Autonomous Region of Far East Russia.

The congregation in Artyom is doing well under the leadership of Nicolai and Natasha. Praise the Lord that the congregation there is now almost completely self-supported, although Celebrate Messiah still sends regular monthly support for our missionaries. In June of this year they will be having their first Messianic conference. They are inviting many churches as well as pastors to attend this conference. This is a great breakthrough that we have been praying for, for many years.

In April this year, Rita Ivenskis, our Russian Jewish missionary, visited this region again to encourage and bless the congregations there and to plough some new ground in the city of Khabarovsk.

In July of this year Rita will again be going to Far East Russia to run two family camps, first in Artyom and then in Birobidzhan. These family camps, which we call Simchas, are special times of rejoicing, praise and worship, as well as study seminars. It’s also a time of healing physically and spiritually. The attendance of both camps is about 160 people. Out of this number at least 70 are children. Many people come to the Lord at this time and their lives begin to change. We are so grateful to the Lord to be able to do this ministry in such an impoverished region.



# TIKKUN OLAM FOOD HAMPERS DISTRIBUTED

December 2018 - March 2019 (excluding Purim)

## BARRY BUIRSKI REPORTS: THE UNOFFICIAL DROP-IN CENTRE

We moved our Celebrate Messiah office to a shopfront on a very busy road in Caulfield North in the heart of an orthodox Jewish area. On several occasions when I have had to come into the office, I have left the door wide open. As a result, there have been several curious passers-by who have stopped to look into our space. On the first occasion a Jewish person came into the office and asked me about some administrative business regarding the office and building we occupy. Soon our conversation changed to the person asking, "So who are you?" I do love those kinds of questions so I immediately responded by sharing that we are Jews who believe in Yeshua as our Messiah. The person listened attentively and then noticed our newsletter regarding *Isaiah 53 Explained* and asked if they could take a copy. I also invited them to come and visit with us any time they could. I believe this was a divine appointment and I was able to engage with them at the right time and the right place. Praise the Lord! Please pray for this man and others who have "unofficially" dropped into the office.



## TIKKUN OLAM

*Tikkun Olam* means *Repair of the World* and it is the name of our benevolent ministry. Each month we provide food hampers to Jewish people in need, and also put together special hampers for the Jewish festivals. This ministry is a vital way to remind our Jewish people that they are not forgotten and that Christians love and care for them.

We distribute these hampers right across the country in Melbourne, Sydney, Perth, Adelaide and on the Gold Coast. Our volunteers and representatives tells us that they have had many opportunities to share the reason why we love and care for the Jewish people (i.e. the love of Messiah), and many wonderful conversations have ensued.



The hampers are always accompanied by a beautiful card that is hand-made by a group of ladies in Bendigo under the leadership of Ruth Stone. We are very grateful for the amazing job they do that shows they care and want to be a witness to the Jewish people who receive the *Tikkun Olam* parcels.

Here's one response from a grateful hamper recipient:

*"Thank you for the thoughtful and delicious hamper for our hungry family! It's amazing how much teenagers can get through, so I'm very appreciative of the enormous effort and selflessness, Tikkun Olam donors, yourself and volunteers go to in helping struggling Jewish families to make their lives easier. It is such a big Mitzvah! Wishing you all health and happiness. Thank you and with much gratitude, Sarah and family."*

If you would like to support *Tikkun Olam* with your tax-deductible gift, please earmark your support to Tikkun Olam on the response piece. Thank you so much for caring.



## DANIEL AND ANNA ZEUNERT AT ZULA LODGE WANAKA, NEW ZEALAND

We are both excited to share with you some details of our short-term mission trip to New Zealand! The mission was to share the gospel with Israeli backpackers. Thank you for your support and interest in this mission – one we hope we will get more of chance to do in the future!

The Zula Lodge is a backpacker facility housing 30 guests just outside of Wanaka in Otago, New Zealand that was specifically purchased as an outreach base for Jewish evangelism. The Zula offers three free nights accommodation to Israeli travellers. The travellers are aware that it is a Christian mission organisation, and that this is why it is free for them. The travellers are given a pamphlet when they arrive called, 'Why us?' which is a Jewish specific gospel tract.

Anna and I were surprised at the Israelis' openness to discussing our

faith and the Gospel. They were naturally curious as to why we would give up our time to come and serve them, and nearly all of the people we had meaningful conversations with would ask us about our faith.

We were both sharing our testimonies on various occasions, being inspired by the faith in Jesus of the other volunteers who were Messianic Jews from Israel, reading Psalm 29 with an orthodox guy in Hebrew in his own prayer book, connecting with an Israeli family with three kids who came to the lodge, organising to pick up some of our new Israeli friends from the Melbourne airport when they come in Australia in March, and going on an all day hike with three of the guests to a glacier!

We are very grateful for this opportunity.

Dear friends of Celebrate Messiah,

I hope that you've enjoyed reading a much fuller report about some of the work that Celebrate Messiah does both locally and abroad. We haven't reported on the work we do in Israel together with our partners Chosen People Ministries. Perhaps next time we will give you a full report on the work in Israel.

Needless to say, we do need your partnership and prayer for the Jewish people worldwide and the mission of Celebrate Messiah. Each one of our missionaries relies on the support received from our prayerful partners, as does the general ministry and evangelistic projects.

If you are not already giving to Celebrate Messiah on a regular basis through our **Romans 1:16 Partnership** programme, please prayerfully consider joining that program and becoming a monthly supporter. This certainly does help us budget and plan for upcoming mission activities and events. Every cent counts, as we share the good news with Jewish people in Australia, New Zealand, Russia and Israel.

Thank you so much for your partnership.

Yours in Messiah,

Lawrence Hirsch  
Executive Director of  
Celebrate Messiah Australia

## CELEBRATE MESSIAH STAFF



Current staff members are:

**Admin Staff:** Mark Polonsky (general manager), Jenny Di Stasio (bookkeeper), Sharon Dingjan (church caller and all round Hebrew expert), Mark E (IT).

**Missionary Staff:** Lawrence Hirsch, Louise Hirsch, Barry Buirski, Rita Ivenskis, EM, Paul Cohen, Robert Miles, Eugene Kuznirov (Birobidzhan), Nicolai Feostov (Artyom).