

Reflecting God's Glory

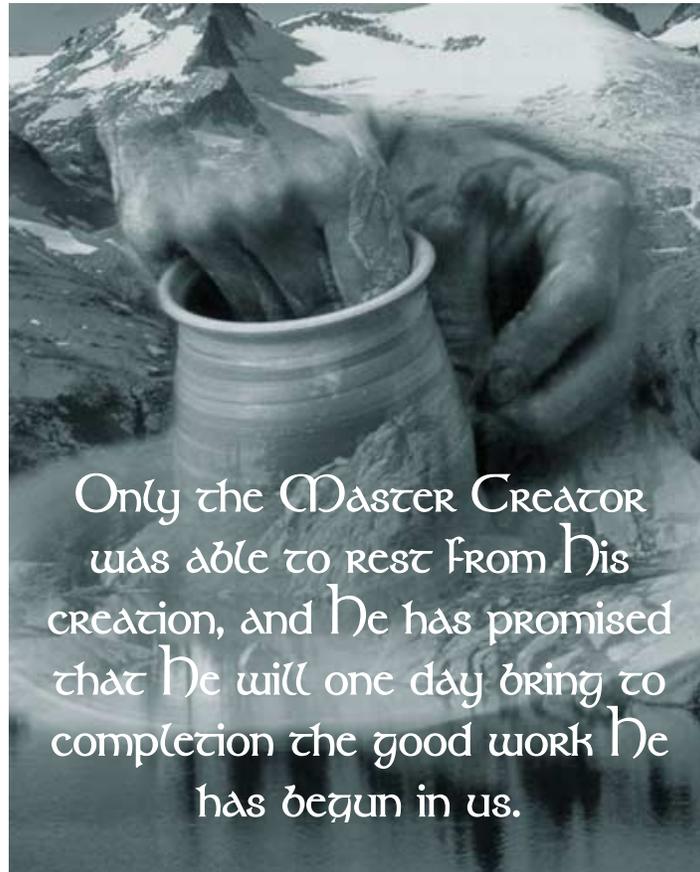
BY DAVID BRICKNER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Have you ever walked into the middle of a forest and looked up through the trees to see the beautiful, deep blue ceiling of a sunlit sky? Can you picture the sunbeams reaching down like searchlights through the varied shades of green leaves? The light touches here and creates a soft shadow, it touches there and turns a leaf translucent. Or have you stood atop a cliff overlooking an endless expanse of ocean, breathing in the refreshing scent of saltwater as the mighty surf pounds out its never-ending symphony on the rocks below?

Our world is a canvas in the hand of the Master Artist, the Grand Designer, the Lord of the Universe. Through His creation, God provides us a tiny glimpse into His imaginative power, the wonder of His aesthetic sensibilities and His love for all that is truly beautiful. The psalmist said it most eloquently: "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork" (Psalm 19:1). What a marvel of creative mastery is this world in which we live!

That Master Designer also pours His artistry into human beings. We are the pinnacle of His creative work; we possess the capacity to reflect bits of His glory through our own lives. What arrogance it seems for us to imagine it so—but we need not imagine. Genesis 1:27 clearly states that we were created in God's image.

I believe that part of being made in God's image is our ability to share His creative nature. Some members of the animal kingdom have creative instincts. A spider can weave a beautiful web, but she does so for her survival. Human beings create for pleasure or to express our thoughts and feelings. In this, we seem to be unique among all of God's creatures.



Only the Master Creator
was able to rest from His
creation, and He has promised
that He will one day bring to
completion the good work He
has begun in us.

God creates, I believe, partly for His pleasure but also to convey His message. The pageantry of the Tabernacle and the Temple show God's attention to artistic detail. While I imagine He took pleasure in the beauty of the carved gold, the artistic hangings, etc., He was also making a statement. The place of meeting between God and His people was holy, set apart. And part of the "set apartness" was its stunning beauty, created by God's people who willingly parted with their gold and gave of their talents to make these holy places as glorious as they possibly could.

Think of the high drama that God used with the prophets, especially with Ezekiel. It wasn't enough for Ezekiel to speak the Word of the Lord. He had to literally make a spectacle of himself. Our creative God conveyed His message in ways that were calculated to get the people's attention.

There exists another rather creative being—Satan. He creates illusions, lies and counterfeits. He does not use his

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talents to proclaim the truth, but to distort it. Unable to create anything on his own, he twists God's creations. He bends beauty, perverting it so expertly that it does not lose all of its appeal, but it loses its ability to reflect truth, to reflect God. Because we human beings are bent from the weight of sin, Satan's work often appeals to the perverse tastes and pleasures of our fallen race. We hear his distortions in music that glorifies evil and violence; we see it in art that appeals to raw sensuality or in the pandering of Hollywood to any one of our baser sensibilities. Some of the most creative achievements of our culture do not reflect the glory of God but the distortions of Satan. The enemy of God is using every means at his disposal to disseminate his message of hate and rebellion.

That is why it is so very important for God's children to employ God's creative gifts in proclaiming the life-giving message of salvation in Christ. And that is why one of Jews for Jesus' Core Values is creativity. Moishe Rosen once said, "It is a sin to bore people with the gospel." God came up with an amazingly creative plan of redemption, and yet if we are not careful, we can turn our proclamation of it into dull religion. Not only that, but our Jewish people are raised to resist the gospel. If we are to make the Messiahship of Jesus an unavoidable issue to our Jewish people who are committed to avoiding it, we must bring to bear every ounce of creativity we can.

We at Jews for Jesus want to be on the cutting edge of creative communications and that is not an easy task. We expend a good deal of effort to develop music, drama, art, writing and multi-media. Yet, it is easy to become complacent, to be satisfied with the *status quo*, to allow the sharp edge to become dull. But we must continue to push ahead and strive for that creative edge. One way we do that is by telling one another, "Good enough isn't." We have a creative and editorial process that puts every project through the wringer of critical examination. All our staff members know, "The only one who doesn't get rewritten around here is God." Yet that kind of quality control cannot produce creativity, it only hones it.

To keep our creative edge, we need to keep a couple of things at the forefront of our lives. One is the joy, the exuberance of our own salvation, that leads us to be almost playful in proclaiming the truth. The other is the pain, the

anguish that we feel over the lost, that leads us to keep digging deeper to find some new way of challenging people to consider Jesus. These are the elements the Holy Spirit uses to guide and draw forth our creativity. When I ask you to pray that we in Jews for Jesus will continue to strive as a creative communications cadre, it is a spiritual request. Complacency is the enemy of both joy and anguish. It can dull our sensitivities and our edge—and it is inevitable apart from spiritual renewal. So, please continue asking God to renew us!

When I became the executive director of Jews for Jesus, I told our staff that I believe the best songs have yet to be recorded; the best books have yet to be written; the best literature has yet to be developed and the best methods of outreach have yet to be employed in proclaiming the gospel. The staff took that as a real challenge and I've been encouraged by the results. Some of you have read the new books, heard the new music, seen the new web site, etc. Since this issue of the newsletter celebrates creativity, you can read a bit about our new "webzine" and Multi-Media Department on pages 6 and 7. I hope you'll look at the photos of some of our more unusual outreaches over the years too (pp. 4, 5). I still believe the best is yet to be. I only hope that we will be "tuned in" enough to what God wants, to have His inspiration and blessing in forging ahead.

When I compare our efforts to some of the brilliantly creative talent the world produces, I am thankful that God does not need slick, Hollywood-type productions to accomplish His purposes. I don't expect that we'll ever have a Shakespeare or Spielberg on our staff. But we do recognize the Lord as the source of all that is truly creative and good. We need to reflect His glory in all that we do. We have a long way to go, but we continue to strive and we continue to treasure that God-given creativity as a key component in making Messiah Jesus known.

The great artist Michelangelo produced an enormous cache of beautiful artwork. Yet there is an entire hall in Florence, Italy filled with his "unfinished work." We will never fully "finish" our work either. Only the Master Creator was able to rest from His creation, and He has promised that He will one day bring to completion the good work He has begun in us. Then, and only then, will we fully and truly reflect His glory.

**WE EXIST TO MAKE THE MESSIAHSHIP OF JESUS
AN UNAVOIDABLE ISSUE TO OUR JEWISH PEOPLE WORLDWIDE.**

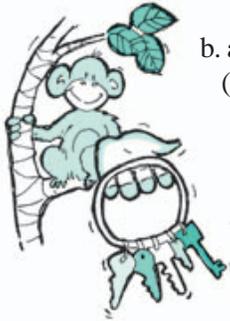
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Test Your Yiddishkeit*

The word "kipah" is pronounced **kee-pah**, accenting the first syllable if you are using the Yiddish pronunciation. (The Hebrew pronunciation accents the second syllable.)

Test your yiddishkeit by circling the definition you think best describes the word kipah:

a. what a grandfather from Brooklyn calls something he is not inclined to throw away



b. an appendage (e.g. "paw") specifically used for holding one's keys



c. a head covering, also known as a yarmulke, worn at all times by very Orthodox or observant Jewish men, and worn for any religious occasion by the less Orthodox



If you answered "c" you are ready to go on to the true story below.

*Jewishness

Prayer Prompters

Please pray for:

the Holy Spirit to keep our staff renewed, and that the joy of our salvation as well as our sorrow over the lost will inspire us to keep on communicating creatively (p. 1)

many people to consider Y'shua, the good and true force from having seen our new webzine (p. 6)

Eric, our coffee filter kipah-clad friend, to continue meeting with us to learn more about Y'shua (p. 3)

Roman and Avshalom to receive their Messiah (p. 8)

Howard G., Zinaida, Alla, Helen, Chris and Robert to grow in faith (p. 8)

IT REALLY HAPPENED...



P.S. - PLEASE PRAY FOR ERIC, AFTER DONNING HIS CREATIVE KIPAH SUBSTITUTE, WAS AMAZED TO SEE HOW CLEARLY ISAIAH 53 DESCRIBES JESUS.



Amer Olsen, professional artist and volunteer Campaigner "drew attention" to biblical prophecy with his pastel rendition of Rembrandt's Jeremiah

Instead of "Palm Readers" we have experimented with "Psalm Readers"



This is part of a message we displayed in New York City's Times Square. The entire message reads, "The Messiah has come and His name is Y'shua"



Jews for Jesus Headquarters' staff get out of the office now and then to spread the good news in San Francisco



Music is always a wonderful way to express the good news of salvation in Jesus



A Picture Can Be Worth . . .

Karen stopped by the New York Center a year ago, February. She was Jewish, liked Jesus and wondered if she could help out with some volunteer work. After speaking with her for a few moments, our staff realized that Karen did not really know who Jesus is or what He had done for her. An artist who grew up in California, Karen continued to suffer the after-effects from the drugs and the lifestyle of the early 1970s. Many medications and bouts with mental illness made her life difficult, but somehow through it all, she realized that Jesus was the Way. She came to our office wanting to offer her time, but found that Jesus had something to offer her first. She gladly heard and believed the message of salvation, though it was difficult to gauge just how much she understood.

Karen was persistent and consistent in her desire to volunteer with us. That very day, she helped out for five hours and, over the months, she continued to come back for more.

Several of our staff read the Bible and prayed with Karen whenever she came. However, due to the difficulties mentioned, she had a hard time focusing. She desired to read the Bible and pray, but her attention would wander.

One day, it occurred to Tovya Rose (who now leads The Liberated Wailing Wall, but was part of the New York branch at the time) that art might be the way to help Karen focus on a Bible study. He asked her to draw a picture of a lamb and a picture of a man. She did so. Then he explained atonement and the sacrificial system using the pictures that Karen had drawn. Her attention was riveted throughout the Bible study. When she came to volunteer the next day, she announced, "Last night was the first good night's sleep I've had in years. When I woke up this morning, I felt like a weight had been lifted from my shoulders." Then she looked to heaven and said, "Praise the Lord! Thank you, Jesus! I understand." It was the most expressive and confident statement she had made since she first came to us. She has continued to volunteer with our branch and her help is much appreciated.

When you stop to think about it, the gospel itself is a work of art. Jesus' birth, life, death and resurrection present a graphic picture of how God's love and righteousness triumph over sin and death. God is the great Creator, the source of all artistry. When we meet people who struggle to understand His truth, God Himself provides the inspiration we need to demonstrate His message in creative ways.



Sometimes people are willing to discuss serious matters with a clown



Giving "juice from Jesus" enabled us to tell people how to quench their spiritual thirst

“Y-not”

The call to evangelize requires us to go to the highways and the byways—to bring God’s invitation of salvation to people who do not come looking for it. Today, those highways and byways include pathways known as the “Internet.” The Jews for Jesus web site has been a great way to meet seekers, and we are continually looking for creative ways to update our on-line ministry. One of the more recent developments is our “webzine.”

The webzine is not designed for Christians. The goal is to reach unbelievers—particularly Gen-Xers—in ways that will challenge them to think and check out the gospel for themselves. If you would like to recommend the webzine to unbelieving Gen-Xers you know, it is located at: “ynot.jewsforsjesus.org.” The “zine” is produced by our web guys, Serge Yurovsky and Rich Robinson.

With all the recent hub-bub over *Star Wars*, our web team designed a special *Star Wars* edition for our webzine. To promote the web site in general, and the *Star Wars* edition in particular, a couple of us visited movie theaters. We dressed up in costumes and handed out cards to the throngs of people lined up to buy tickets for the premier showings. I dressed as Chewbacca and Serge Yurovsky dressed as Obi-wan Kenobi.

Scott Sjostrom videotaped us as we distributed cards inviting people to the web site. Our “jedi,” Serge, asked a number of people thought-provoking questions about “the force” and their answers were captured on film.

The mood as people waited on line was festive. We were not the only ones in costume. Yet despite the jovial mood, I was struck by the futility and hopelessness of people looking for something to fill that God-shaped void in their hearts. Oh it’s not that people took the movie all that seriously, but many seem to have modeled their own religion after the false philosophy of the “force” as they sought some kind of power to work on their behalf.

At the same time, more and more people are seeking answers to their questions through the safety and anonymity of the Internet. Pray that many people will be drawn to our evangelistic web site. May the Lord be with you!

—Hannah Neufeld, missionary
San Francisco

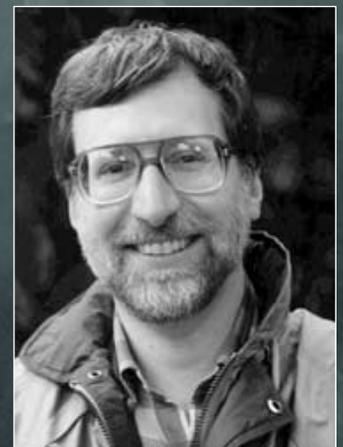


The **Star Wars webzine** has already come and gone, but here is an excerpt from a piece that Rich Robinson wrote for the site:

I get the feeling that the Force is not very personal. I wouldn’t want to have lunch with the Force. Or go bowling with the Force. And could I tell which side of the Force I was talking to at any given time? Is it the good side or the dark side? You don’t talk to the Force, anyway. The midi-chlorians do that, except it’s not really talking and it certainly isn’t praying. It has something to do with our feelings, I think.

On the other hand, I like the idea that we can talk to God. I like the idea that God is personal. I really like the idea that He only has a good side. No guessing games if I’m talking to Dr. Jekyll or Mr. Hyde. I know where I stand with God. . . . You can talk to God, or pray to God, or sing to God. I don’t want my midi-chlorians—if I really have any—to do my talking for me. No, if I have something to say, I want to come right out with it.

Another reason God is better is that He gives some guidance about how to live. . . . And here’s another reason God is better for the Jews. God keeps us accountable. There’s right and there’s wrong. There’s sin and there’s forgiveness. . . . We don’t need “balance in the Force.” We need justice and goodness and mercy.



Jews for Jesus founder Moishe Rosen gives answers for

What to say when they say . . .

"My rabbi told me: 'Christians take messianic prophecies out of context to try to persuade Jews that Jesus is the Messiah.' He says that if you take passages out of context you can prove anything you want, and that if you don't know the original Hebrew, it is impossible to understand the meaning of those texts."

Well, the rabbi makes a good point: if people take a Bible text out of its context and completely disregard the meaning of the surrounding Scriptures and known historical interpretations, they can make it say what God never intended. So far as Christians taking all the prophecies out of context, that is the kind of sweeping statement that needs to be questioned. In this case, almost all the texts Christians cite were understood by some ancient rabbis as referring to the Messiah. We have excellent documentation to support this.

Secondly, it would be foolish to think that Peter, James, John and the other apostles didn't know Hebrew. When

Philip found Nathaniel, he said, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph," (John 1:45b). Even today, while there are many believers in Jesus who do not read or understand the Hebrew texts, there are certainly others who do.

Finally, if the rabbi says that you can't understand the Jewish Bible unless you know Hebrew, he is arguing for gnosticism rather than Judaism.

Gnosticism places distance between the religious authority and the seeker/student by claiming a superior or elite knowledge. Since a minority of ordinary Jews and Christians understand Hebrew, it is something that a religious authority can hide behind. In fact, a good translation, while not having all of the nuances of the original languages, is more than sufficient to one's understanding. Not only that, but those who know modern Hebrew and Greek may well have lost certain language nuances that the ancient translators understood.

Finally, I would point out that statements which sound believable are not necessarily true. The rabbi himself may have accepted such a statement without checking its validity, because it came from someone he respected and because it helps him comfortably dismiss a belief which is considered taboo.



Multi-Media

using today's technology to help people focus on the Lord

Next month's newsletter will include a flyer for our brand new Jewish Evangelism kit. Since we are talking about creativity this month, we thought we'd introduce you to Michelle Brown and Scott Sjostrom, who created the two-part, award winning video series featured in the kit. Michelle is a graduate of Central Michigan University with a Bachelor of Applied Arts degree in Broadcast and Cinematic Arts. Scott is a graduate of Biola University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Communications with emphasis in Television and Film. Together, they make up our relatively new Multi-Media Department, which is overseen by Sue Perlman. She says, "Michelle and Scott are more than meeting our expectations. They not only know what it takes to write, produce, shoot and edit excellent video, but they have hearts for evangelism. I'm looking forward to the day when they produce an evangelistic television commercial worthy of Super Bowl airing."

Michelle Brown with her ever-ready smile



Scott Sjostrom with his ever-ready camera

Teresa Sischy reports from **New York**, "I took my son, Eliyah (almost 3) to the Central Park Zoo. He was reluctant to leave the reptile section because he wanted to see the hiding gecko. Finally, the gecko emerged and Eliyah asked me to, 'Do a Bible study with the gecko'! So we presented the gospel to the gecko (and whomever else was listening). What an example of how God has been influencing our family life! My prayer is that as Eliyah grows, his concern will shift from reptiles to humans and that he will grow up loving and serving the Lord." (Teresa's husband is a missionary trainee and Teresa enjoys participating with the branch whenever possible. The Sischys are now finishing their training in their native South Africa.)

Also from **New York**, Mitch Forman reports, "Howard G. called our office after seeing a Jews for Jesus pamphlet at 125th Street in the heart of Harlem. Someone must have taken our tract, read it on the subway and left it on the seat. Anyway, Howard is in a 12-step program and has been reading the book, *The Power of Positive Thinking* by Norman Vincent Peele. But he knew that as a Jew, he wasn't supposed to believe in Jesus. Then he found our broadside on the subway and gave us a call. A missionary trainee and I visited Howard, who was amazed to see how Jesus fit perfectly with the concept of atonement. Howard is now a brand new believer!"

From the **CIS**, Lilia Rakhlina reports, "I tried contacting Roman T. many times, but he was never home. His Gentile wife, Zinaida, showed interest and asked if I could teach her about God. I invited her to my church and she came with her Jewish friend, Alla. At that service, they both repented and put their faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior. Please pray for these women and for Roman's salvation."

Bob Mendelsohn reports from **Australia**, "Helen described her flight from the terror of Nazi Germany over coffee in suburban Sydney. Her brother was killed and her sister was in line to be killed in Auschwitz in 1945 when an American soldier intervened. Helen told me how she and her husband escaped from Yugoslavia to Italy in 1944. 'I knew someone wanted to spare me,' she said. 'Who?' I

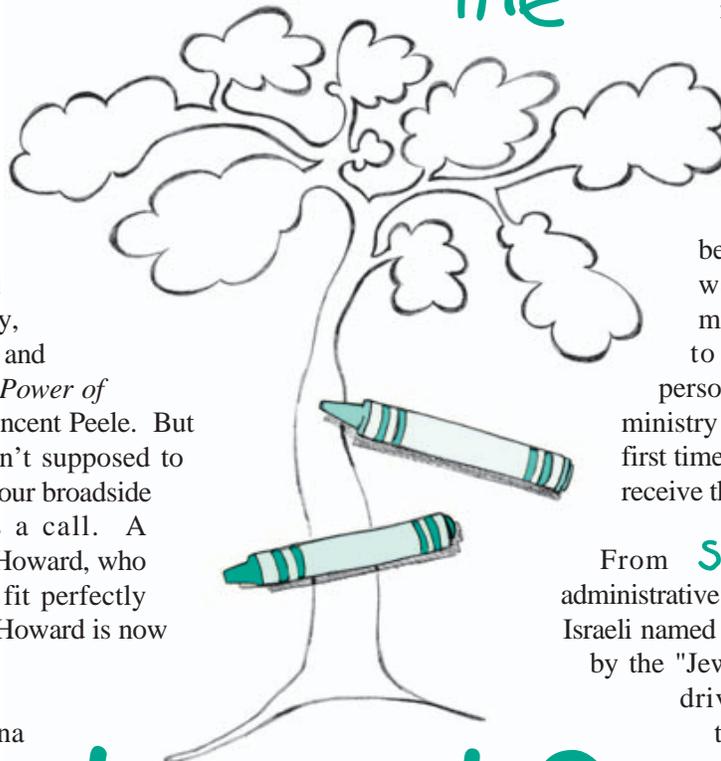
inquired. Helen didn't know. I read to her from the Bible and described God's love and goodness. I told her that Y'shua could rescue her from sin's death sentence. She received the gospel and prayed to Jesus for new life and forgiveness. She then answered my question: 'Who was the "who" in my story? It was Jesus!' Oh, you might be wondering where we got Helen's name . . . she rang 411 and asked the operator for help finding a Jewish person or agency (she was trying to find out how to secure some of the recently released Swiss government moneys for Holocaust survivors). The operator gave her our number! I had read about the process in the newspaper just the day before, so I knew how to get the forms for application. What a mighty God we serve!"

From **Chicago**, Melanie Rose reports, "Chris did the electrical work at our newly renovated office. I began witnessing to him after work one Friday, and 45 minutes later, prayed with him to receive the Lord! On a personal note, I've been with the ministry for six years and this is the first time I've prayed with someone to receive the Lord!"

From **San Francisco**, administrative assistant Susan Bragg met an Israeli named Avshalom who was intrigued by the "Jews for Jesus" van Susan was driving. He didn't know that there were Jews who believed in Jesus and wanted to know more! She told him about Jesus and asked if a missionary could call him and send some evangelistic literature. He enthusiastically agreed! Missionary David Mishkin called Avshalom and he was very interested in learning more about Y'shua. Please pray for Avshalom's salvation.

Also from **San Francisco**, David Mishkin reports, "While having lunch after a campus sortie, a man in his fifties came over and said, 'I couldn't help but notice your shirt . . .' I invited him to sit down and he told me that he was Jewish, and had been involved in a cult for a many years, but was now interested in Jesus. We met again and he made the decision to make Y'shua his Messiah and Savior! His name is Robert."

bits from the



branches