

Our Best Kept Secret

BY DAVID BRICKNER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Last month, we announced a new evangelistic outreach called, "Operation Behold Your God." Just in case you didn't see the newsletter article, we are committed to reaching every city outside of Israel with a Jewish population of 25,000 or more for Jesus—by the year 2005. Many friends have told us they are thrilled that Jewish people in these far-flung cities will hear the gospel. Yet, many overlook something just as thrilling, and that is the effect that Behold Your God will have on the non-Jewish communities of these same cities.

During our Summer Witnessing Campaigns this past year, 155 Jews came to faith in Christ, but 735 Gentiles also received the Lord Jesus. Five times as many non-Jews came to faith in Christ as Jews! This has always been true of our ministry, particularly with our street witnessing campaigns. This "well kept secret" is important to remember as we dream of what God can do through Operation Behold Your God.

Our founder, Moishe Rosen, was on a television show with a rabbi in Detroit many years ago. The rabbi made what he seemed to think was an accusation saying, "I know about you Jews for Jesus. You convert three times as many Gentiles as you do Jews." Moishe responded, "What do you want us to do, throw them back?" The Bible says that all the angels in heaven rejoice when one sinner repents (Luke 15:10) and we Jews for Jesus love having a part in that rejoicing whenever possible.

If you know your Scriptures, you won't be surprised by this "secret"—that Jewish evangelism helps all kinds of people come to faith. That is why God commanded the gospel to go "to the Jew first." When you preach the gospel in a way that Jews can hear, a whole lot of other folk listen in as well.

So while we may refer to our "best kept secret" with a smile, it's only a secret to our opposition. They like to use words like "targeting" to describe any efforts to proclaim the gospel in ways that our Jewish people can understand. Part of their rationale for rejecting the gospel is the notion that we single out Jews in order to rob them

of their Jewishness. That notion is harder for people to sustain when they see that we are giving the same message to non-Jews. In all fairness to our opposition, it is difficult for those who don't know Jesus to grasp how telling people about Him is an act of obedience to God and an act of compassion to whomever will hear. Even more, it is difficult for them to see that proclaiming the gospel to everyone is our destiny as Jews.

Jews for Jesus is a Jewish mission, but that does not mean that our

mission is only to Jews. Certainly, when it comes to follow-up and personal visits, our resources are limited and our commitment is to Jewish people. But when we go out to the streets, we preach the gospel to everyone. In this way, we have opportunities to extend the blessing God spoke to Abraham when He said, "And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Genesis 12:3). This is the very purpose for which God called Abraham and his descendants: to be a vessel through which He would proclaim good news and accomplish worldwide witness.

Unfortunately, Israel as a nation has yet to fully understand or accept that responsibility. Yet, God's purposes are not thwarted by human unbelief or disobedience. His call upon Israel to be the means of worldwide blessing is being accomplished in Israel's greater Son, the Messiah. ". . . Indeed He says, 'It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the

continued on page 2

continued from page 1

Gentiles, that You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth” (Isaiah 49:6).

So, Abraham’s blessing is made available to all of the nations of the world through Israel’s Messiah Jesus. We believe God still wants to use Jewish people to bless the nations today and the greatest blessing we have to offer is still the good news of the Messiah Jesus.

That is why we are so excited about Operation Behold Your God. We know we are not the first people to go to these cities to proclaim the gospel and we hope to stand with churches and evangelists who have already been reaching out to some of these cities for years. But for many, many people of the “Behold Your God cities,” this will be the first time that they hear the gospel from the lips of Jews. This will be quite a shock to some who have never heard of Jews believing in Jesus. This will be particularly true in areas that have been known for persecuting the Jewish people.

We believe that as Jews return to share Y’shua’s love and forgiveness in cities where so many of our people were persecuted, it will provoke many to listen to a message they may have heard and ignored all their lives. We hope and pray that as they hear the gospel in a new way, they will respond in faith.

Recently, one of our staff, Avi Snyder, traveled through Eastern Europe to make contacts and establish networks for

some of our Behold Your God cities. Avi handed out gospel tracts in the Polish language—just outside of the infamous Warsaw Ghetto. People stopped on the street. They were amazed to see Jews proclaiming the love of Christ in a place where our people were treated with such hatred. A couple of months ago, we opened a branch office of Jews for Jesus in Essen, Germany. So Germans—who are so deeply aware of their country’s history and tragic relationship to the Jewish people—are now hearing the gospel proclaimed by Jews who love Jesus. It is not merely for the sake of our own Jewish people that God has raised up a ministry such as ours.

Dear friends and supporters, many of you have stood with us through the years because you want to have a part in reaching our Jewish people with the gospel and, for that, we are truly grateful. We will continue to carry out that mandate by God’s grace. But we hope and pray and believe that God will accomplish much more through our efforts. As we keep on proclaiming the gospel to the Jew first, God will continue touching the hearts of all kinds of people He brings our way. Thus it will still be said of our people, “And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

Have you caught a glimpse of our vision for Operation Behold Your God? Can you see the scope of what we hope God will do through Jews for Jesus? Then I hope you will join us in praising God that His eternal purposes will surely be accomplished!



The final autumn festival on the Jewish calendar is known as the Feast of Tabernacles, in Hebrew, *Sukkot*. The Scriptures commanded a season of rejoicing and thanksgiving to God for the harvest; it was also a time to request His blessing on the harvest to come, “. . . because the LORD your God will bless you in all your produce and in all the work of your hands, so that you surely rejoice” (Deuteronomy 16:15). Many believe that the pilgrims modeled their first Thanksgiving celebration after this joyous Jewish holiday. May your Thanksgiving holiday be a season of rejoicing in God and His wonderful provisions. We give thanks to God and to you for enabling Jews for Jesus to take part in a harvest of souls this year. Please continue to pray with us for God's blessing on the harvest that is yet to come. *

thank you

thank you

* We are working on a new book titled *Christ in the Feast of Tabernacles*. Look for it sometime next year!



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

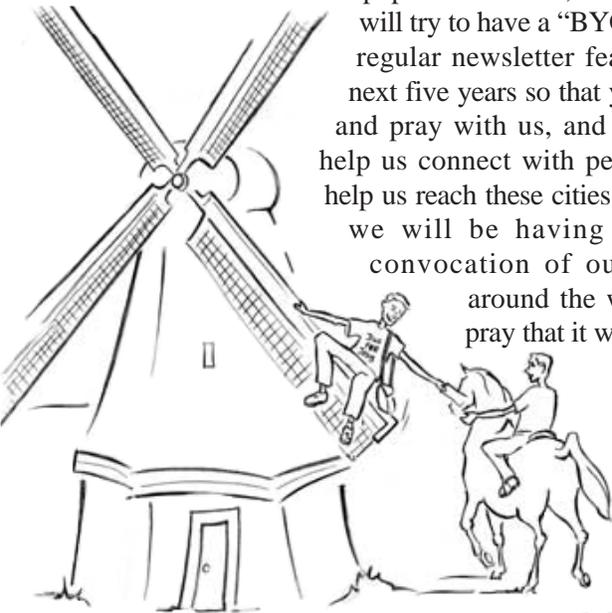
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BYG Stands for "Behold Your God!"

Sure hope you had a chance to see our special edition newsletter last month that announced Operation Behold Your God. In the next five years, we will be doing all we can to have outreaches and follow-up in 60 cities throughout the world with Jewish populations of 25,000 or more. We

will try to have a "BYG Corner" as a regular newsletter feature over the next five years so that you can dream and pray with us, and perhaps even help us connect with people who can help us reach these cities. Next month, we will be having a two-week convocation of our staff from around the world. Please pray that it will be a time of preparation and renewal for us all.



Planning for the Future?

If you are one of our Jews for Jesus supporters, we know that you give because you love the Lord, not because of what you can receive. Still, there are ways to plan your giving so that you make the most of the resources God has given you—plans that can help you meet your own needs at the same time as you are helping meet the needs of those who need the gospel.

For example, gift annuities enable you to give a gift, whether cash or appreciated securities, while still receiving the interest on that gift as part of your income. And, should you go home to be with the Lord before His return, your gift will continue to help us tell people about Jesus while you are busy singing His praises face to face in Heaven.

Note: Donations of appreciated securities can be particularly beneficial as part of your year-end plans.



Prayer Prompters

Please pray for:

 preparations for Operation Behold Your God, that our staff will be spiritually in tune with God as we reach for this goal over the next five years (p. 1,2)

 our new missionary trainees, that they will learn much in their academic studies as well as in their daily evangelistic exercises; that God will protect and encourage them in this difficult calling; and that He would be gracious to bring their unbelieving family members to faith (p. 4,5)

 our New York branch as they hand out gospel tracts at the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade; and that the gospel seed will fall on fertile ground

 continued fruit through our chatroom and web ministries; and for new Jewish believers Cindy and Lisa to continue growing in their faith (p. 6)

 grace and strength for new Jewish believers Rivka (Israel), Shimon (Israel), Ed (Canada), Lee (United States) and Sheila (South Africa) (p. 8)

 salvation for Pamela (England), Beatriz (Canada), Cheryl (United States), Michael Sischy's father and sister (South Africa) and Masha (Ukraine) (p. 8)

Stocks given directly to the ministry allow you to pass on the blessing of your wise investments while you avoid capital gains tax and gain some tax allowances for the current year.

If you would like to include Jews for Jesus in your financial planning, but are unsure of the possibilities, we have a Stewardship Department to explain options that can help you make the most of your giving. Please complete the enclosed card and return it to us if you think such information might be helpful.



start spreading the news

ANOTHER CLASS OF MISSIONARY TRAINEES INVADE NEW YORK



Maha McDiarmid



Dean McDiarmid



Bryon Dorn



Shaun Buchhalter

Maha McDiarmid

I come from an Egyptian and Palestinian background, and was born and raised in a Muslim home. At birth, I was betrothed to my first cousin, but did not know it until I was fourteen.

I remember telling my mother when I was twelve that the only thing I would believe in without question was God. As for the rest of the Muslim religion, I would need explanations. My mother is a wonderful woman and she answered every question to the best of her ability. Whenever she couldn't answer, she would write to my uncle in Egypt who was a sheik, which is like a rabbi or a pastor, but for Muslims. My mother truly wanted me to know God. Yet the older I got, the more empty my heart grew and I knew that I could not remain in my home and live the life that would be expected of me. At age fifteen, I began making plans to leave home.

I left when I was nineteen. My family disowned me. Months after I left home, every righteous desire I had to seek God was gone. But God was not through with me! The Lord placed a girl in my life who befriended me and began to share the love and truth of Y'shua with me. She invited me to church and, with great reluctance, I finally went. Only months later, I came to faith in Jesus. That was in 1995.

From very early on, I knew I wanted to be a missionary. At age 23, I met Dean McDiarmid and, one year later, we were married. My husband happened to be a Jewish believer and also wanted to work on the mission field. God has graciously given us both the desires of our hearts.

Dean McDiarmid

I had been interested in Jesus since my early teens and I was even reading the New Testament. Yet as a Jew, it didn't seem right that I should believe in Him. I moved to Israel hoping that I would find the God of Israel and be fulfilled as a Jew.

My *kibbutz* turned out to be secular, so I left for Jerusalem hoping, once again, to find God in the City of David. I lived in Jerusalem on and off for almost a year. I attended a couple of *Yeshivas* (religious schools where people train to become rabbis), but I left confused and empty. Where was my God? The God of the Bible? The God of whom Jesus spoke?

During this time, the *Intifada*, or the Palestinian uprising, was gaining momentum. I came to believe that all Arabs were the enemy and I began to feel a real hatred towards them. I even justified some of the wrongs I had seen, but deep down I knew that hating others was not the way to survive as a people. I was not happy with the person I was becoming.

My mother fell ill in Chicago, so I returned to the United States. I had never felt so lost. In addition to dealing with her illness, I was dealing with the loss of all of my hopes, my ideals and notions of finding God in Israel. Having lived there for several years, I knew that it was not the answer to the emptiness I felt inside.

My loyalty to my Jewish people, history, culture and to Israel had been the most important thing in my life, but it was not enough. During this time, a faithful friend named Bob was unceasing in his witness to me. It really made a difference. And, as I continued reading the New Testament, I could not deny that Jesus was who He said He was, the Messiah, the Son of God who died for your sins and mine and, on the third day, was raised from the

dead. I realized that He deserved my loyalty first and foremost. Some may say that I have turned my back on my people by believing in Jesus, but ironically, I now feel the best way to express my loyalty to my Jewish people is by sharing that good news with them.

If you would have told me ten years ago that I would be a missionary for Jews for Jesus, I would have told you that you were crazy—and even crazier if you would have told me that I would be married to a beautiful Palestinian Arab believer in Jesus. With God all things are possible!

Bryon Dorn

I grew up in a little town, Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania, which is really only famous for two things: Joe Namath and Geneva College. My parents met at Geneva College. My mother, a Gentile believer, began to witness to my father, who is Jewish. Eventually, he came to faith in Jesus and I was raised in a Jewish-Christian home. At the age of six, I received Y'shua into my life as my personal Lord and Savior.

When I was 13, I had a messianic bar mitzvah. It made a bold statement of my faith and salvation in Y'shua, the Messiah.

However, as most teenagers often do, I went through a period of rebellion and disobedience. I became involved in what are called "role-playing games." The most famous was "Dungeons and Dragons." These games can become addictive and they also open some dangerous spiritual doors. Playing "Dungeons and Dragons" is really dabbling in the occult. Although I never went very far with the games, they affected my relationships with God and with my parents.

These problems came to a head one snowy evening. I wanted to go to my cousin's house to play the game. My

parents had already forbidden me to play these games. They didn't know that that was my intention, but when I asked them if I could go, they still said no because the streets were unsafe to travel. I called my cousin and had him come pick me up. I was at his house for about three hours before my parents realized that I was gone. When the phone rang, I felt sick to my stomach because I knew it was for me.

Back at home, my father made me sit down and read the prodigal son story found in Luke 15:11-32. I saw how I had been straying away from God. I denounced the games and apologized to the Lord and to my parents.

God made a lot of changes in my heart. He gave me a burning fire and zeal to serve and witness. My study of Scripture and my relationship with God became my own rather than just my parents'.

I got involved with Jews for Jesus in the summer of 1997 and I've been involved in many short-term volunteer positions with them since then. When I graduated from Geneva College, I decided to come on staff full-time as a vocational missionary. God has truly blessed and sustained my faith and walk with Him all my life. Praise the Lord!

Shaun Buchhalter

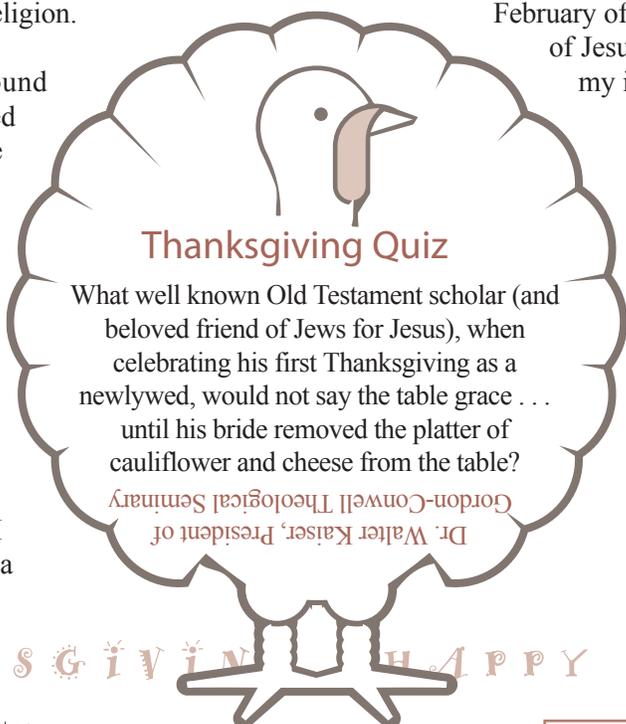
Growing up in Brooklyn as a Jewish Puerto Rican, you could say I had a slight identity crisis. In fact, I spent most of my adolescent years searching for my identity. In the process, I looked toward many things: friends, academic success, girlfriends and drugs—but I never felt fulfilled.

In an effort to start a new life after my freshman year of college, I transferred to a school 700 miles south—in North Carolina. During my first day on campus, I noticed a beautiful girl. As I approached her, hoping to get a date, I got the biggest surprise of my life. She was a

Christian. Natalie let me know right from the beginning the importance of her faith in God. That first semester I had many interactions with Christians who challenged my understanding of God and religion.

And on New Year's Eve, I found myself on the corner of my bed kneeling and asking God, if He existed, to show Himself to me because I was jealous of the Christians I had met and the joy that they had. A month later I bumped into Natalie. It had been about three months since we had last spoken, and the first words out of her mouth were an invitation to a Christian outreach. Two days later I found myself listening to a

message titled, "Whose Kingdom Are You Seeking?" A week later I confessed as many sins as I could remember and asked Jesus to come into my life. That was in February of 1998. And now that I am a follower of Jesus, for the first time I am confident in my identity and that is a Jew for Jesus.



Thanksgiving Quiz

What well known Old Testament scholar (and beloved friend of Jews for Jesus), when celebrating his first Thanksgiving as a newlywed, would not say the table grace . . . until his bride removed the platter of cauliflower and cheese from the table?

Dr. Walter Kaiser, President of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary

More introductions of new missionary trainees to come!

We are thankful that we don't have space to introduce you to all of the missionary trainees because God has blessed us with a class of nine new missionaries. Be looking for Cyril and Rhonda Gordon and Bruce Rapp!

HAPPY THANKSGIVING HAPPY THANKSGIVING

Cyber Evangelism



People who check out Jews for Jesus on the web and in chatrooms are often taking a first step on a faith journey that leads them to Jesus. Sometimes, as with Cindy, they don't live near our branch cities, so phone and mail follow-up is our best option. (She and Moishe first "met" online.) Other times, as with Lisa, we are able to meet face-to-face. We hope the following letter and narrative will encourage you and help you to remember to pray for our online ministries.

Lisa initially checked out the Jews for Jesus website at the request of her Christian boyfriend, Jim. She expected to make a five-minute investigation just so she could tell him that she had looked. Instead, she ended up staying for over an hour! She also left her e-mail address so we could contact her.

Rob Wertheim began meeting with Lisa and they studied the Bible together over the next few months. Then Lisa called to tell Rob that she was going to visit her mother and that she planned to tell her mom about her spiritual search. With tears in her voice, Lisa asked Rob to pray that her mother would not be angry.

Later that day Rob called Lisa, who reported that her mother had actually been glad to hear about her search.



Hi Moishe,
I wanted to thank you for taking some time with me on the phone last year. My name is Cindy and I was living in Mississippi when we spoke last. I really appreciate the books and materials that you sent me. God really used you and those materials to help me on my journey. I want you to know that I accepted Jesus into my heart last September and have been blessed ever since. Thank you for your prayers and support.

—Cindy

In fact, her mother agreed to look up the Bible passages Lisa had suggested. It seems that years ago, someone had given Lisa's mother a Bible with her name stamped in gold.

Rob asked Lisa if she had decided to ask Jesus into her heart since she was already telling her mom about the gospel. Lisa replied that she had not yet said a prayer of commitment. He asked if she was ready and without hesitation she said, "Yes," so Rob prayed with her to receive Jesus!

Moishe's Musings on Lifestyle Evangelism

Far be it from me to disparage any kind of evangelism. But I have noticed that in some circles, “lifestyle” or “friendship evangelism” has become a euphemism for, “Be nice and don’t mention Jesus until they ask.” Now don’t get me wrong, I believe that Christians ought to love and demonstrate respect for Jewish people and everyone else. It’s the waiting until people ask part that bothers me. Frankly, if people had waited for me to ask about Jesus, I would not have heard the gospel. Most Jews don’t bring up that subject to Christians; it is too sensitive.

Let us approach this subject positively by asking, “How soon after meeting Jewish people (or anyone else) should one mention Jesus?” The answer is simple: it depends on how important Jesus is to you. Friends talk to one another about what they regard as important. If you seek God’s face daily in prayer, believe that He answers prayer and that one’s personal salvation is the most important thing in life, you will mention Jesus fairly soon and your faith will often figure into your conversation. I am all for that kind of lifestyle evangelism and wholeheartedly admire those who practice it.

There is another kind of “lifestyle evangelism” that I can’t endorse. It’s the kind where people congratulate one another that actions speak louder than words, and that if others know they are a Christian, they need not say anything about Jesus so long as they live exemplary lives.

Isn’t it interesting that Rabbi Yechiel Eckstein, an Orthodox Jew, promoted this kind of evangelism about a year ago in his article “Witnessing vs. Proselytizing,” which was posted online at the *Christianity Today* website. Eckstein is a man of great sensitivity and tact, but he is not a believer and his goal is not to see other Jews become believers. Helping people win Jews to Christ would make Eckstein anathema in the Jewish community. Yet some Christians regard him as an expert on how to successfully share their faith. Eckstein claims to uphold the Christian mandate to witness, but eventually he discloses his opinion that it is arrogant for Christians to think that Jewish people need Jesus. His article outlines a history of anti-Semitism that Jews have suffered in the name of Jesus, and Eckstein concludes, “If Christians want to share their faith with Jews, they should start by being good friends and neighbors, and wherever possible, ‘good Samaritans.’ Evangelicals call this style of witnessing ‘lifestyle evangelism,’ and it seems to me a self-evidently superior form of outreach.”

I think that Christians should be concerned that Rabbi Eckstein has gained quite a platform among evangelical Christians. As reasonable and affirming of the Christian religion as Eckstein might seem, his commitment as an Orthodox rabbi is still at odds with those of us committed to seeing all people, including Jewish people, find salvation in Jesus. In truth, he would probably mourn over each Jew who came to believe in Jesus if he takes his rabbinical calling seriously.

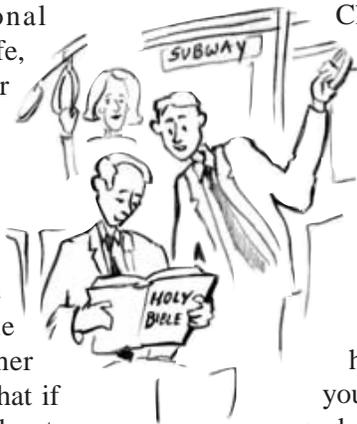
I’m afraid that some Christians have been so flattered by Eckstein’s approach that the utter lack of logic in using him as an authority on Jewish evangelism escapes them.

In a way, I am glad that Eckstein speaks so highly of “lifestyle evangelism” because it affords thinking Christians the opportunity to reflect on how to fulfill the Great Commission. The kind of lifestyle evangelism Eckstein praises centers on how nice people can be, whereas the Bible centers on why the cross is so necessary.

It’s absolutely right to be kind. Yet the Great Commission was not to go into the world and be nice to everybody until they see how wonderful you are and ask, “What makes you to be so wonderful?” The gospel is about the wonderfulness of Jesus. Yes, we should reflect the fruit of His Spirit in our lives to attract people to Him. But we do not have to earn the right to tell anyone about God’s wonderful plan of salvation. It is our obligation and our privilege to tell what God has done. The gospel is not how nice I am, but how Jesus is the sin-bearer and how He died according to Scripture and rose again from the dead.

The gospel that we preach is foolishness to those who perish. The cross is always an offense. If you expect Jews for Jesus to be liked by everyone because we are very nice people who are never controversial, I am sorry, but we will be a disappointment.

We think it is most important to carry the cross courageously and to proclaim that cross as God’s only way of salvation. If lifestyle evangelism means having the courage to let people know what Jesus has done for us in the course of everyday life, I hope you will pray with us that we will always have the heart to maintain that kind of “lifestyle.”



From **London**, office worker Paula Cummings reports, “We received a letter from a man named Michael in Surrey, asking us to contact his Jewish girlfriend, Pamela, who he said was very open to the gospel. How did he hear about Jews for Jesus? He was walking through the woods near his home and discovered a decaying Jews for Jesus leaflet. The only part that was readable was the tear-off slip offering to witness to Jewish friends. He was so intrigued that he filled it in and sent it to us. Coincidence? I don’t think so!”

From **Israel**, missionaries Shlomi and Miriam Abramov report, “We had some vacation time in Tiberias where we had the joy of helping to lead two people to faith. The first, Rivka, had hosted me [Miriam] when I first came to Israel ten years ago. I have prayed many years for Rivka. What a joy to see her receive the Lord! The other person, Shimon, worked at the ranch where Shlomi and I went horseback riding. Shlomi struck up a conversation with him and two hours later, Shimon also received the Lord.”

From **Toronto**, missionary Marcello Araujo reports, “Ed and Beatriz moved here from Mexico and began attending my Spanish Bible study to meet other Spanish-speaking Jews. They were skeptical at first, but they came faithfully (and eventually invited their friends). As the months went by, their interest in the Lord grew steadily. After a recent Bible study, Ed lingered as everyone else was leaving. When I asked him if he wanted to talk, he said, ‘Yes. What do I have to do to receive Jesus as my Messiah?’ I led him in a prayer of repentance. Beatriz said she was glad that her husband had the courage to believe. But when I asked her if she was ready, she said, ‘Not yet, but don’t give up on me!’”

Missionary Greg Savitt reports from **Florida**, “A Jewish man named Lee came to one of my church presentations. His boss had been witnessing to him and, as a result, Lee decided to ‘randomly’ attend a church. He ‘happened’ to choose the church where I was speaking. In the course of conversation, the pastor mentioned celebrating Passover every year with a couple who turned out to be Lee’s wife’s cousins. Both Lee and his wife, Cheryl,

were amazed at the many coincidences. I met with Lee the following week. He had good news: he had returned to the church where we met and had given his life to Y’shua! Cheryl was somewhat taken aback. Please pray for Lee to grow solid in his faith and for Cheryl to be open to the gospel.”

From **South Africa**, missionary Michael Sischy reports, “I had a recent opportunity to witness to my father. He and I have been visiting my sister, who is ill, traveling at least an hour each way to the hospital. This has been an amazing time of bridge-building. Please pray for my father’s and sister’s salvation.”

Also from **South Africa**, Michael’s wife Teresa reports, “I was discouraged as it seems I might lose a Jewish friend because I have been witnessing to her mother. I kept holding fast to Paul’s words: ‘For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek,’ (Romans 1:16). The following week, I met with a

Jewish woman named Sheila. Sheila’s Christian friend Lilly had been faithfully sharing her faith for many years, but wasn’t quite sure what to do when Sheila began responding with interest. Lilly asked us to meet with her friend and I had the privilege of helping Sheila come to faith. Praise the Lord for this encouragement just when I needed it!”

Outreach worker Dina Markova reports from **Odessa**, “My sortie (tract-passing expedition) was nearly at an end, but not one Jewish person had expressed an interest in hearing more about Jesus. I stood and prayed: ‘Lord, not once have I asked You to give me contacts without having You respond graciously. I’m asking now for a contact.’ One minute later, a girl headed straight toward me. She wore a necklace with a Star of David. I asked her, ‘What do you think of the Messiah of Israel?’ ‘Nothing,’ she replied. I said, ‘You wear a Star of David, are you Jewish?’ And she replied, ‘Yes.’ Then she gave me her name and address to receive more information about Jesus. Please pray for Masha, that she would know Jesus Christ as her Lord and Savior.”

