

THE CHOSEN PEOPLE MINISTRIES TEL AVIV INITIATIVE

2015



Chosen People Ministries

JANUARY

Dear friend,

Something is Happening for God in Israel!

Chosen People Ministries is expanding ministries in Tel Aviv!

Sensing a need to focus on reaching younger and more secular Israelis, we now have three trained staff members dedicated to serving this ever-growing community. We have also rented a facility for Bible studies and outreach, and we are praying the Lord will provide a few more workers who have a passion to reach Israeli young adults...and their young families!

Our staff is following up on those who have responded (more than 200 Israelis) to our Hebrew language Isaiah 53 web-based campaign —most of whom live in the greater Tel Aviv area. This campaign, which is scheduled to intensify in the spring, is one of our primary means of discovering Israelis who are open to the Gospel.

The rented space in the northern downtown area of Tel Aviv also provides a home for the growing Russian/Hebrew-language congregation planted by Chosen People Ministries. The Joy of Jesus Congregation (Simchat Yeshua) has ministries among Russian Jewish immigrants and their children and a special ministry to the “down and out,” as well as those afflicted with drug addiction.

We continue our efforts to reach elderly Russian Jews and Holocaust survivors with

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the Gospel, offering practical aid and benevolence to this needy community. And I assure you that our new ministries will not replace what we have been doing and what God has already been blessing. As I said, “We are expanding!”

Let me share a quick story with you of what the Lord has been doing through Your Mission to the Jewish People among elderly Holocaust survivors, a community of 200,000+ dying at a rate of 30,000 precious people per year.

One of our staff members reported,

Larisa is a 76-year-old Holocaust survivor we have been ministering to for several years. Larisa was born in Central Europe and was sent to a concentration camp as a young child.*

Larisa is full of energy and joy. She attends all our events for Holocaust survivors, volunteers at one of our food distribution centers, and attends a weekly Bible study run by a member of our staff. This week, there were two happy events in Larisa’s life. At the beginning of the week, her son and daughter-in-law had a baby boy. Yesterday, Larisa was baptized! Praise the Lord! Several of our staff members had the privilege of being present at the baptism. Afterwards, Larisa said to me, “I feel different. I feel like a weight has been lifted off me.”

TEL AVIV IS THE PERFECT PLACE FOR US TO REACH A NEW GENERATION OF YOUNGER AND MORE SECULAR ISRAELIS FOR THE LORD.



I can’t help but think about how the birth of the grandson of a Holocaust survivor is a victory over human evil, while her baptism is a victory over spiritual evil. Please pray for Larisa and for her walk with the Lord.

Why Tel Aviv?

Our hearts break for these elderly Holocaust survivors and we will do all we can to reach them before they pass from this world. Yet, we must turn our eyes towards the future as well! This is why I am writing to you and hoping that you will pray about helping us make a difference in the future of Jewish ministry in Israel. Tel Aviv is the perfect place for us to focus as we seek to reach a new generation of younger and more secular Israelis for the Lord.

The Tel Aviv municipality has about 500,000 people and was founded in 1909 by secular Jews. But, if you include the suburbs and outer ring of smaller towns, known as *Gush Dan*—the greater Tel Aviv area

has a population of 3.4 million people—which is 42% of Israel’s total population.

*name changed

The area includes cities like Petach Tikvah, Herzliya, and Rishon Lezion. Many of the people who live in Gush Dan are involved in business, commerce, technology, education and medical professions. They are younger and more secular in general than those who live in Jerusalem or Haifa. Tel Aviv is also Israel's economic hub and the nexus of culture, nightlife and growing younger families.

Tel Aviv has beautiful beaches, is very modern and forward thinking and a large majority of the people who live in Tel Aviv are in their 20s and 30s. In fact, the opportunities for creative ministries among younger adults—singles and families—are wide open!

However, in my experience speaking to this younger crowd in the Tel Aviv area, I have found that many are searching for the deeper meaning to life and a more authentic, “non-Orthodox” spirituality. So many of these young people, having traveled the world after their service in the army, dabbling in Eastern religions and drugs, also recognize that these things do not satisfy their souls. When given the opportunity to talk about spiritual matters, and even about Jesus, many open up willingly and ask questions about God and listen to the answers we provide. Many are searching for authentic answers, but simply do not identify with “organized religion.”

This is one reason there is a growing attraction among these young adults to the reality of the Gospel in the lives of our staff and the believers they meet in Tel Aviv. It is why the testimonies on the Hebrew Isaiah 53 website are so powerful. Stories are so convincing!



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Connecting with Young Israelis

Our Tel Aviv team leader, who is one of our most experienced staff members, has been in charge of the teams we send out to reach young Israelis traveling to very exotic places after the army! Some travel to Latin America and hike along the Amazon River. Others travel to India and live on the beaches or backpack through the mountains of New Zealand. The Israeli army provides some funding for these trips for those who have served in the Israeli military after completing high school (three years for men and two years for women). During these travels, young Israelis tend to be very open to the Gospel. It is also easier for them to have initial conversations about Jesus outside of, rather than within, the Holy Land.

We believe the time has come to focus on these young people and follow up more intensively with those whose lives were touched outside of Israel. We've already seen this strategy at work!

Let me share a brief report from our Tel Aviv team leader:

I've already “accidentally” bumped into a couple of Israelis I met in Argentina and New Zealand. One immediately shared that she is still reading the New Testament and it still makes her happy.

We will meet for coffee later this week when I'm back in Jerusalem (she is at Hebrew University). I've gotten together with some Israelis that lived in New York, and through them met a number of young Parisian Jews who moved here fleeing French antisemitism.

Let's Reach Israelis for Jesus Together!

Through our Isaiah 53 Online Evangelistic Campaign, we have not only distributed a



TEL AVIV IS ISRAEL'S ECONOMIC HUB AND THE NEXUS OF CULTURE, NIGHTLIFE AND GROWING YOUNGER FAMILIES.

couple hundred books to Israelis who requested them, but more than 225,000 Israelis have watched the testimony of a young Israeli believer on our Isaiah 53 Hebrew website. The average time this testimony was viewed was 5½ minutes—an extraordinarily long amount of time for online activity. What's even more important to me is that over 90% of those watching the video are from the Tel Aviv area. So I know that these young Israelis are open to the Lord.

We have very ambitious plans for the work in Tel Aviv. Every time I travel to Israel—and I just returned—the vision grows stronger and larger! So would you help us begin this ministry by

helping to provide \$100,000 during this next year for staff housing in Tel Aviv, which is very expensive, as well as some additional funds to help continue the Isaiah 53 Campaign? We have staff in place—so your gift will be used immediately to help those who are already doing great work.

The Gift of Life

Speaking to a group of Jewish people, Jesus said, *“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me”* (Jn. 14:6).

Did you know that the number 18 means a lot to Jewish people? Before the revival of Hebrew as a modern language, there were no numbers as we know them. Combinations of the Hebrew letters of the alphabet served as numbers! But this ancient way of forming numbers lingers on to this day. The Hebrew word *chai*, which is two letters, equals 18. And this word means LIFE. So would you help us give the gift of life to secular, young Israelis and their families in Tel Aviv by sending a gift that might be a multiple of 18?

Perhaps you can only give \$18, but then again you might be able to provide \$180 or \$1,800! Whatever you give right now will help build the foundation for our future ministries among secular, younger Israelis and their families. This is the future! And we cannot do it without you.

Thanks so much for giving sacrificially to make the Good News of Jesus the Messiah known in the land of His birth.

Happy New Year and blessings in our risen Messiah,


Mitch