

# THE CHOSEN PEOPLE



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MAY 2023

## REACHING ISRAELIS

AROUND THE WORLD



JAPAN



BRAZIL

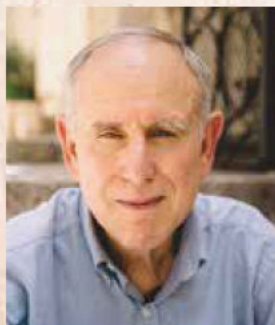


NEW ZEALAND

# Reaching Wandering Israelis after Military Service

Dear Friend,

Shalom in the peace of the Messiah! Thank you for taking a few moments to read our current issue of the Chosen People Ministries newsletter. Through our newsletters and other publications, we try to keep you up to date with what is happening within the Jewish community, the State of Israel, and with Your Mission to the Jewish People.



FROM THE PRESIDENT,  
MITCH GLASER

## TEL AVIV UPDATE

We deeply appreciate your prayers and support. I want to update you on the new Messianic center in Greater Tel Aviv. We continue to work on two tracks. First, we are now in the fifth month of raising funds for this new facility in the greater Tel Aviv area, which is home to about four million Israelis! Second, we have started construction on the build-out of this commercial space in a brand-new building. We have to

add walls, floors, heating and air conditioning, and bathrooms . . . well, you get the picture! This new space will house our Bible studies, weekly outreach events, a café, concerts, future congregational activities, and so much more.

We could not be more excited about the future as openness to the gospel, especially among younger Israelis, is moving like an unstoppable wave across the country. We are doing all we can to make our Messiah known and discipling those who come to faith.

Please pray and join us in building a future for the Messianic movement in Israel through your generous support. There is more information about how you can give toward the new facility at the end of the newsletter.

## ALL ROADS LEAD TO TEL AVIV

Over the past few years, we continued to see the common cultural practice among Israelis of traveling the world after serving in the Israeli military. Thousands of young people explore other countries and cultures, and Your Mission to the Jewish People established youth hostels and teams of staff and volunteers to meet these wonderful young people. We show them the love of Jesus the Messiah through hospitality and by creating a home away from home during their travels. We are now meeting thousands of young Israelis outside of Israel and proclaiming the good news to them as they tour. Once back in Israel, we invite them to meet others with similar experiences and spend an evening or attend a reunion event at our current rented center in the greater Tel Aviv area.

We serve this wandering Israeli population in New Zealand, Japan, other parts of Asia, Australia, and the United States. We provide a place for them to stay or connect with Jewish believers in Jesus and Christians who love the Jewish people and invite them into their homes. We proclaim the gospel in both word and deed; and we generally do not say much about the gospel until they ask—which our Israeli guests often do! Of course, we provide Hebrew New Testaments and other resources for them to read if they are curious. We simply offer unconditional love, good food, a listening ear, and prayer as requested.

As you would imagine, while we extend this level of kindness, the younger Israelis want to learn more about our motivation. In a world so filled with anti-Israel (and often antisemitic) activities, we stand out to them because of our love, and they want to know why we care. We tell them about our belief in what the Bible teaches about God's love for Israel and the Jewish people and, most of all, the love God offers through His Messiah—Jesus!

## STORIES OF GOD'S WORK AMONG TRAVELING ISRAELIS

Beit Samurai ("House of the Servant") in Tokyo, Japan, is our newest hostel. Our team there has already received dozens of Israeli visitors and reported several amazing stories. Here is just one of them:

Ori\* and a friend of his stayed at Beit Samurai for a few days. He planned to go to New Zealand. He mentioned one of his friends in Israel was Messianic. Sensing his openness, one of our staff invited him to have lunch

\*Names changed

together before he headed to the airport. As we waited for our food, he suddenly asked, “So, how do you explain ‘Messianic’ and Yeshua to Jewish people?” Our team member was a bit stunned. Not only was he open—he was asking directly to hear the gospel.

After listening to our staff member’s testimony and hearing about encounters with Yeshua within the Messianic faith and community, Ori asked if there was a Messianic congregation he could attend. He also expressed a desire to read the Bible for himself. Our missionary invited him to attend services with him when he comes back to Japan. Since he is going to New Zealand, he also connected him with a Messianic congregation there.

This staff member gave Ori a copy of *Isaiah 53 Explained*, which he gratefully received. Through our Chosen People Ministries global network, staff put Ori in touch with Yitzhak,\* a Messianic leader in Auckland, New Zealand. They connected right away. Ori asked for a copy of the New Testament to read, so Yitzhak gave him a Bible. The following week, Ori came back to Yitzhak with another Israeli. Yitzhak also told him the full gospel of Yeshua. This Israeli also decided to stay with Yitzhak for the next several days.

Our network of hostels and homes welcoming traveling Israelis also expanded to Taiwan in 2020. During the past three years, we have built Beit Simcha (“House of Joy”), a hosting network in ten cities around Taiwan, connecting many families and teams from different churches to participate in the Israeli backpacker ministry. God is wonderfully using the network as His cords and bonds of love to draw Israelis to Messiah (Hosea 11:4). In one home alone, we hosted 140 Israeli backpackers and families. Many continued to



BRAZIL

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visit other Beit Simcha homes and kept hearing the gospel while traveling around Taiwan. We have heard numerous testimonies from Beit Simcha partners.

Planet Zula in New Zealand, however, is one of our oldest and busiest hostels. It is still the center of a vibrant ministry. A few months ago, our staff there sent us this story:

During one of our weekly Monday evening Bible studies, one of our Israeli guests joined us. We always have lively discussions, and he jumped right in and asked amazing questions. Afterward, he and our Israeli volunteer dug deeply into the Hebrew Bible for hours. The next morning, when he came to say goodbye, his face was shining as he told us he now had a completely new understanding of the New Testament. He realized how the Old and New Testaments fit together—and demonstrated by interlocking his hands. He expressed his desire to read the New Testament and took one of the free copies we offer.

Hosting traveling Israelis has proved a fruitful ministry for several years—and shows no signs of slowing down! On the contrary, we plan to continue expanding this hospitality network to other places. Since this effort is so important and dear to us, this newsletter is dedicated to giving you an **in-depth look at what happens at our hostels.**

Discover a sample itinerary for a week at a ministry guest house. Hear what Israelis thought during their global travels following their military service, and how our staff help them process difficult questions. Along the way, you will read several stories about how God is working through this ministry. It profoundly encourages me—and I am confident it will encourage you as well.

Your brother,

*Mitch*  
Mitch



## For several years

now, we have coordinated a vibrant global ministry to young Israelis as they travel the world after their mandatory army service. Their post-military year is a key transitional time for twenty-something Israeli men and women before they embark on a path to a vocation or university. They are discerning their next steps and are remarkably open to discussing life's biggest questions. Your Mission to the Jewish People oversees a global network of hostels and hosts who welcome Israelis to stay with them. Staff and volunteers embody the love of Jesus through hospitality—by cooking meals, organizing tours of local sites, providing games, etc. When appropriate, we broach spiritual conversations. In this newsletter, you will get an inside look at a few of our hostels and hosts—those in Brazil, Japan, and Bolivia, and discover how Israeli travelers might spend up to a week with us. You will also hear directly from some Israelis we interviewed about their post-military travels. Ultimately, you will see how our hospitality network is meeting the needs of wandering Israelis—both physically and spiritually.

## A TYPICAL WEEK AT OUR GLOBAL HOSTELS

### Sunday

Guests at our hostel in Tokyo might visit a local cafe for lunch and even trade hummus recipes with the owner. They might also take a walk in the nearby historical Kyū-Furukawa Gardens to soak up Japanese nature, including Japanese maples, plum blossoms, and koi fish in a pond.

In the evenings, guests often join hosts for tea or coffee and dessert. These casual times naturally foster conversations involving getting to know one another, telling stories, talking about faith, and hearing about must-have local food recommendations.

Our global hosts serve Israelis who come from all kinds of religious backgrounds with various views about God. Many Israelis grow up secular—not consistently going to synagogue or practicing Judaism but still valuing Jewish identity. One man said, “I grew up secular, but I was always interested in what it meant to be Jewish.”

A small but growing minority of Israelis grow up in believing homes. They know about the gospel but also need to embrace it for themselves. One person explained, “I was born into a family who believes in Jesus, but it was never a part of me. I would go to church sometimes and read the Bible, but it never spoke to me. I felt it was a faith that belonged only to my mother and my siblings.” Wherever our guests are spiritually, we seek to know each person's story and how we can show them the love of Jesus.

### Monday

Since our hostel in Brazil is new and not yet well-known among Israeli travelers, our volunteers stay for now at other hostels popular with Israelis. Along the way, they hope to meet Israelis and invite them to our ministry's new guesthouse.

In Tokyo, guests may take an evening stroll through the nearby Rikugien Gardens, home to a 300-year-old giant cherry blossom tree. While there, guests can enjoy spring desserts and *amazake* (a sweet, rice-based drink), while winding their way through the garden, which is lit up to celebrate the blossoms!

Our Japanese hosts love music and may play instruments with guests in the evenings.

Most Israeli travelers we welcome have recently completed their required army service, which can be a difficult time, raising many hard questions. One woman told us, “During my service, I felt a lot of hatred toward myself, as I tended to compare myself to others. I started to think that life had no meaning and, over time, I developed a lot of hatred and anger toward God. I thought He was a bad God who played with humans, and that it was fun for Him to watch us suffer.” These challenges and questions make it relatively easy to engage Israelis in deep conversations.





# Reaching Israelis with Hospitality

## Tuesday

Israelis staying at our guesthouse in Tokyo may visit a sumo pen in Ryogoku, where sumo wrestlers live and train. While eating at a nearby sumo restaurant, the guests may spot several sumo wrestlers in traditional dress.

These young Israelis travel, they often ponder and plan their next big steps in life—like what to study, what career to pursue, and where to live. Exciting, but also stressful, topics like these lead to even deeper questions about God and His purpose. One woman noted, “I had a lot of questions about existence—why we humans were created and what the purpose of life is.”

## Wednesday

Guests in Tokyo may pack a lunch to enjoy outside under the cherry blossoms. Then, they may join our hosts for a Japanese pottery class just five minutes from the guesthouse.

One Israeli man who traveled in Bolivia was staying at the home of a volunteer Christian couple. He describes how his Christian hosts showed him love. He admitted, “God is about love. I wondered, ‘Why did they care for us like that?’ I could see they had an unusual grace.”

## Thursday

Israeli guests staying with us in Tokyo may walk the Imperial Gardens in nearby Hibiya Park, and they might also enjoy a stretch on the emperor’s pristine lawn.

Exploring nature is a common activity at our hostels in beautiful destinations around the world. These excursions are not just about seeing dazzling scenery, though. One Israeli woman said, “I decided I was going to travel, and as I saw the landscapes and wondrous creation, it further proved to me God exists.”

## Friday

By Friday, volunteers in Brazil who stayed at other hostels return to the ministry at the new guesthouse. Hopefully, some of the Israeli travelers they met come with them.

Guests in Tokyo may take a morning manga-drawing class with a local manga artist and illustrator!

Our hostels host a Sabbath dinner on Friday night for staff and guests. The Israeli guests often work with our volunteers to make beloved Jewish dishes. The menu also features local specialties. For instance, our guesthouse in Japan prepares *temaki sushi*, a culinary experience in which guests fill and roll their own sushi. The joyous, family-style environment of our Sabbath celebration leads to great conversations, often including discussions about faith. Our volunteers have many opportunities to tell their testimonies during this special meal. Clearly, the weekly Sabbath dinner is one of the key highlights at our hostels!

## Saturday

Our Tokyo guest house may prepare a *shakshuka* breakfast party. (Shakshuka is a tomato-based stew topped with eggs and is a common breakfast dish in the Middle East.) Hosts then invite guests to join them for a morning service at the local Messianic congregation and stay for a wonderful lunch!

## FRUIT FROM OUR LABOR

After a few days, or as long as a week, our Israeli friends continue exploring other parts of the world or return to Israel. If they expressed interest in learning more about what we believe, our staff in Israel will follow up with them. Sometimes we even have reunion parties in Israel where our international hosts come to Israel and meet again with the very Israelis who stayed with them.

We always rejoice when we see fruit from our global hostel work, like with this Israeli man who came to faith after traveling the world:

*I was always looking for spirituality, but in the wrong place (like falling in love with a woman or through acts of charity). As a child, I had a sense of Jesus. After seeing all the troubles in the world and in the country, I would say to the sky, “Let’s see you come down and fix things,” and I saw an image of Jesus on the cross. God was always speaking to me all my life; what He spoke was confirmed later—it all came together. After coming to faith, it became clearer.*

Although only a few hostels are mentioned here, there are also very popular guesthouses in India and New Zealand, about which we have written at great length elsewhere. We are also expanding this ministry of hospitality by bringing a hosting network to the United States. You will not only learn more about this outreach in the coming months, but you may also have the opportunity to be part of this network! Stay tuned!



## Micah 5

## The War against Israel and the Coming Messianic King

Micah chapter 5 continues the theme of Zion's warfare, with Micah calling the Israelites to prepare for war.<sup>1</sup> Micah reminded the Israelites how often they have engaged in war, referring to them as "*daughter of troops*." Much of Micah's prophecy addressed the internal warfare in Israel between the rich who were in power and the poor whom they besieged. Now, his prophecy speaks of external enemies who would lay siege against them and who would "*smite the judge of Israel on the cheek*." To strike someone on the cheek means to humiliate an individual. But who was this judge Micah was talking about?

Although the next part of this prophecy speaks of the coming messianic king, Micah 5:1 is not talking about Jesus (Yeshua) as some would speculate. Though Jesus was tortured and humiliated at His crucifixion, and Roman soldiers struck Him in the face, different words describe the two leaders—"judge of Israel" in Micah 5:1 and "ruler in Israel" in Micah 5:2. Micah 5:1 refers to the siege by the Babylonians, which would happen more than a century after Micah gave this prophecy. In that siege, Nebuchadnezzar captured and tortured Judah's King Zedekiah, fulfilling this part of the prophecy. Jesus was never smitten by troops of an enemy nation with Jerusalem under attack. The wording of 5:1 indicates a soon-coming event, while 5:2 and following points to a more distant event.

Isaiah and Micah were contemporaries, both writing around the eighth century BCE. In his prophecy, Isaiah foretold the Messiah's virgin birth (Isa 7:14). Micah predicted the Messiah's birthplace: "*But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity*" (Mic 5:2).

Bethlehem Ephrathah was near Jerusalem in the region of Judah. However, there was also a Bethlehem in the north, in the region of Zebulun. By the time of Micah's prophecy in about 720 BCE, Assyria had already taken the Northern Kingdom of Israel captive, and Judah was about to go through the same turmoil. Bethlehem, as the hometown of David, makes the familial connection to King David.

Therefore, just as David was the least of his brothers in terms of status, so Bethlehem was the least

honorable, "*too little*" among the towns in Judah. This prophecy tells us the most insignificant place in Judah would bring forth the most significant person for Israel, the promised Messiah. He is the One who would be ruler in Israel, the promised Son of David.

This messianic prophecy of Micah not only provides the birthplace of Messiah, thus confirming His humanity, but also asserts His deity. Micah wrote about this One who would be born in Bethlehem, "*His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity*." Jesus stepped out of eternity into human history, sent by the Father to die for the sins of the world. But just as He is fully God, He is also fully man, as He was born a human child in the town of Bethlehem. John wrote in his gospel, "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us*" (John 1:1, 14).

Micah wrote in 5:4, this messianic king "*will arise and shepherd [God's] flock [Israel] in the strength of the Lord*" and in His "*majesty*," which is certainly in harmony with His character. Contrast this glorious future with the failure of Israel's leaders in Micah's day. Earlier, Micah had rebuked Israel's leaders (Mic 3:1-3), claiming they do not know justice and "*hate good and love evil*." The pastoral role of Israel's messianic king who leads and cares for His people is in view in Mic 5:4. His greatness ultimately will guarantee their security.



The modern city of Bethlehem.

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Rich Freeman, DMin, serves as the vice president for Church Ministries and Conferences with Chosen People Ministries and lives in South Florida with his wife, Julia.

<sup>1</sup> Micah 5:1 in most Christian translations is actually the last verse in chapter 4 of the Hebrew version.

# NEWS BRIEFS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

## HOW CAN I GET CLOSER TO GOD?

God has been faithful in answering our and your prayers to bring Israeli guests to our hostel in Japan, Beit Samurai (“House of the Servant”). Since January, our place in Tokyo has been full of Israeli guests who have dropped by to spend a couple of days. For our team, it has been a wonderful opportunity to convey the love of God and our faith in Jesus the Messiah. Daniel,\* Sara,\* and Yael\* are Israelis traveling in Japan who asked to stay at our guesthouse. They celebrated a Sabbath dinner with our staff there. During the meal, Daniel showed interest in wanting to hear more from our team about how they came to faith in Jesus. After he heard their testimonies, he began to raise good and honest questions like, “How do you know Yeshua was sinless and perfect?” At the end of the night, Daniel said with heartfelt sincerity, “I want to talk to you more about how I can get closer to God.” The following morning, Daniel spoke with one of our staff members. Daniel told him, “The conversations I had last night touched my heart. I prayed and asked God what He wants me to do with my life.” Daniel explained how the concept of speaking with God was so new and exciting to him! This comment opened a conversation for our staff member to clearly proclaim the gospel to Daniel! He told him there is so much more to learn about Jesus and mentioned the Bible in the guest room. Daniel smiled, “Actually, I already started reading it.”

## BREAKING DREAMS TO HEAL HEARTS

It was a normal beehive of activity as the team was cleaning our lodge in New Zealand one morning—until the phone rang. “Hi, may we please bring Ron\* back to the Zula? He’s had a bad accident and his leg is broken.” Just a few days prior, Ron and his two friends said goodbye after their stay at the Zula to carry on with their adventures of conquering one mountain peak after the other. But as they approached a glacier on one of the mountains, Ron started to run toward it out of pure joy and lost his footing in a slippery stream. He slipped and fell seven meters (about twenty-three feet) down a cliff onto a rock shelf. There he lay with a broken leg, deep lacerations to his face, and a bruised body until his friends were able to summon the rescue helicopter.

Back at the Zula Lodge, leg in a cast and all bandaged up, we tried to make him as comfortable as possible. As our staff spoke with him, they perceived Ron’s disappointment in the abrupt end to his holiday dream and having to return to Israel was far more painful than the physical pain. As one of our staff began to tell Ron of God’s deep love for him, he surprisingly displayed a hunger to know more. Our staff could sense the Holy Spirit cutting through a sea of confusion in Ron’s soul straight to his heart, and when they offered him a New Testament, he gladly accepted, eager to find out more for himself. Sometimes it takes extreme circumstances for us to turn our attention to God and understand how much He loves us and wants to offer us eternal life with Him. Every year, Israeli travelers get injured on the mountains or on the roads. Over the years, there have tragically been a few fatalities too. Please pray for the safety of these young people—both their physical and eternal safety!

\*Names changed

## “YOU TALK TO GOD AS THOUGH YOU KNOW HIM.”

Consider Reuven,\* a recent guest at Zula Lodge [in New Zealand]. Upon arriving, he bluntly declared, “I know who you are and what you believe. I do not want you to talk to me about religion. May I still stay at your facility?” Our volunteer staff warmly welcomed Reuven and assured him their purpose was to serve him, not to force their beliefs on him. At first, Reuven aggressively avoided everyone at the Zula—staff and guests alike. But he soon began to warm to the kind and sincere service our staff freely offered. They took him rock climbing and taught him board games. To his great surprise, Reuven was enjoying the company of this “forbidden” group of people. Finally, one of our volunteers took a risk: “Reuven, do you believe the Torah?” They ended up having a great conversation with Reuven about God and the Bible. But our staff members’ love for God and for one another made the greatest impact on Reuven. After listening to the testimonies and prayers at our weekly Sabbath dinner, he was visibly moved, commenting, “You talk to Him as though you know Him.” Those he shunned only days before he was now inviting to visit him in Israel.

## LEARNING FROM PRAYER IN PRACTICE

After the Sabbath meal on Friday night, everyone settled in the lounge area of Zula to hang out. Chen,\* one of our Israeli guests, began talking to a staff member about her life and beliefs. The conversation turned to prayer, and she told one of our staff members how women within Judaism do not often pray because it is normally the men who pray, and typically only from the *Siddur* (prayer book). She asked if and how our worker prayed. The Lord prompted our staff member to tell her, because of Jesus, she can go directly to her *Abba* (“father” in Hebrew) in prayer. The next day, the Lord gave an opportunity to display this type of prayer life to her boyfriend Eli.\*

As everyone went to bed that evening, the Zula lost access to water. There were eight guests, four volunteers, and the owners of the property—all in need of running water. You can imagine the panic they felt over having so many people and no water. They spent Saturday trying to rectify the problem and informed the guests they would likely not be able to shower until the following day. During this chaos, our staff member felt the Lord prompting her to stop and pray. She invited the people who were standing with her to join her in asking our Father to provide water and a solution to the problem. The volunteers and Eli (Chen’s boyfriend) joined her in prayer.

The water eventually returned, and everyone was able to shower. We are trusting God will use this experience to draw Chen and Eli to Himself. Please join us in praying they saw our faith on display and would come to believe God wants a relationship with them where they, too, can pray to Him as their *Abba*. Pray they would come to know their Messiah and the God of Israel.



# Messianic Resources to Help You

**The People, the Land, and Future of Israel • \$14.95<sup>US</sup>**

"The People, the Land, and the Future of Israel" conference was held in New York City in October 2013 at the historic Calvary Baptist Church. This book contains the messages from this dynamic historic event from great speakers like Joel C. Rosenberg, Dr. Mitch Glaser, Dr. Darrell Bock, and Dr. Michael Brown.

Order these Messianic resources using the enclosed card or call 1-888-2-YESHUA in the United States. For even more resources, visit us online at [store.chosenpeople.com](http://store.chosenpeople.com).



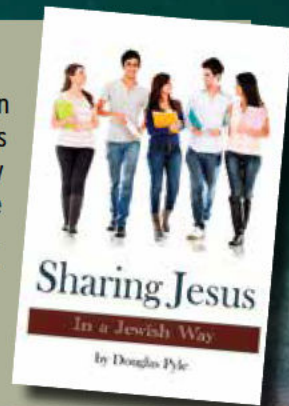
## Miqedem CD

• \$14.95<sup>US</sup>

Miqedem's debut album is a genre-melding collection of songs taken from the Hebrew Scriptures. "Miqedem" in Hebrew means "from the east" or, in poetic significance, "from eternity." This young band is based out of Tel Aviv, and their music reflects the culture of a city caught between worlds.

## Sharing Jesus in a Jewish Way • \$9.95<sup>US</sup>

*Sharing Jesus in a Jewish Way* by Doug Pyle is an indispensable tool to learn all about the Messianic prophecies pointing to Jesus. You will read what the rabbis had to say about the coming Messiah and get answers to possible questions or objections your Jewish friend might raise. This book will give you the advice you need to share your testimony with your Jewish friends. Learn how to break the ice and talk about spiritual things. Know the right and the wrong words to say in order not to be offensive.



On behalf of the Jewish people **whose lives you have transformed through your support of Chosen People Ministries**, we thank you! You are a blessing to those who are meeting their Messiah and today are growing in His grace.

Now, you can support Jewish evangelism in a significant way that may also offer you a tax advantage—by making a distribution gift from your IRA.

- If you are age 70½ or older, you can transfer any amount up to \$100,000 from your traditional individual retirement account (IRA) to a qualified charity without adding a penny to your taxable income—while receiving tax benefits not requiring you to itemize on your tax return.
- This opportunity is possible when you make the donation as a qualified charitable distribution (QCD) with a direct transfer of the amount you choose from your IRA.

If you are 73 or older, this kind of gift also counts toward your required minimum distribution. This benefit was previously offered at age 72, so if you turned 72 in 2022 or earlier, you need to continue taking the required minimum distribution (RMD) as scheduled.

Whether you donate through your IRA or another option, we encourage you to give by June 30, the end of our fiscal year, for maximized impact for the ministry.

**Thank you for the life-changing difference you make for Jewish people everywhere!**

## Many Jewish people met their Messiah because of YOU!

For answers to your questions regarding giving from your IRA or other strategic giving options, contact **Cindy Forbes at 212-223-2252, ext. 1208 or [cforbes@chosenpeople.com](mailto:cforbes@chosenpeople.com) today!**



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A higher standard. A higher purpose.

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