

# JEWES FOR JESUS

established 32 A.D., give or take a year

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## Jesus and His People

by David Brickner, Executive Director

“Jesus I love you, but I don’t understand your wife,  
“She wears too much make-up and she always wants to fight;  
“In my world of black and gray, she argues shades of white.”

song lyrics by Dead Artist Syndrome

Does the evangelical church in America have an image problem? Among the many who would say yes, some of the Church’s harshest critics are Christians, not just in the pews but in the pulpits and lecture halls. Christians broadcast their disappointment in other Christians in songs, sermons, books – you name it.

It is always good to take an honest self-inventory. And we need to remember the counsel of the book of Proverbs that “. . . *he who heeds rebuke gets understanding*”

(Proverbs 15:32).

Do some of us, as the above lyrics indicate, have a tendency to put forth a façade? Do we ever display a quickness to argue our convictions aggressively in tones that are less than humble and sometimes even unkind? I have at times, and maybe you have, too. Yet we need not critique the Church as though we are somehow not a part of it. Plenty of other people are able and willing to do so.

Atheists like Richard Dawkins and Christopher Hitchens have launched their verbal attacks with gleeful abandon, and the media are quick to disseminate their barbs. The Church is getting beaten up from without and within and I don’t like it. Years of direct Jewish evangelism have contributed to my thoughts on this issue.

If any community has had a problem with the Church’s image it is the Jewish community. As Moishe Rosen has often quoted, “*The history of Jewish/Christian relations*



*has been written in blood and punctuated with violence.*” Moishe loves the Church, and from our mission’s inception he taught our staff to love the Church. Yet all of us in this field realize the truth of that quote and how it has affected our Jewish people. The very worst persecutions against Jewish people, including the Holocaust, have utilized the name of Jesus Christ. Talk about an image problem!

You and I know that Hitler was no Christian. Nevertheless, Christian anti-Semitism is a fact. Throughout history, genuine believers including many church fathers and great leaders such as Martin Luther (whose love for Jewish people turned sour later in his ministry) have made incendiary statements against the Jews. Nothing I or anyone else can do will ever change that. About the best we can say is that Christians who have spoken hatefully about Jews (or anyone else) did so in spite of, and not because of their faith. This has made Jewish evangelism even more difficult than it would otherwise be.

But guess what? Unbelievers rarely state the truest of all objections to believing in Jesus. Yes, many Jewish people cling to Christian anti-Semitism as a reason to reject the gospel, but there is more to it than that. Most Jews as well as Gentiles look for any reasons to avoid whatever might lead them to believe and follow Jesus. Can you blame them? The cost of following Christ is

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## Lives Touched: Our Living Waters Outreach in Cape Town

During the holiday season, we were able to soak Cape Town with the gospel message. I traveled south with six volunteers from Jo'burg and connected with six more volunteers in Cape Town. As a team we distributed nearly 10,000 gospel broadsides one-by-one. We also passed out more than 700 water bottles to hot and thirsty holiday-makers with a card attached inviting them to taste of the Living Water from Jesus. A few bus shelters around the city bore our gospel advertisements too!

For two weeks, we spoke to hundreds of people about Jesus and more than 200 gave their information for further follow-up. Because we are walking advertisements for the gospel, the message is clear that Jesus is for everyone. Nearly 50 unbelieving Gentiles asked us to send them more information about the Messiah; that was five times the number of unbelieving Jewish people that requested contact from us. We are convinced that when we preach the good news loudly enough for my Jewish people to hear, everyone benefits in the process. We are fishermen for Jesus who don't throw any of our catch back in the water.

We concentrated our efforts mostly in Sea Point and the main beaches of Camps Bay and Clifton. On the beaches we had a stall so we could hand out bottled water with a card attached since we were not allowed to hand out tracts on the beach. Some people seemed a little suspicious about the water and others thought we were selling it! Most sunbathers readily accepted it and were open to hear about the water that nourishes the soul that only Y'shua can supply.

We were also able to make an impact at night in some of the busy shopping malls around the Cape area, as we wore our brightly coloured T-shirts with "Jesus is Messiah" or "Jesus made me Kosher" printed on them. The flea market at Green Market Square was



Angela and Algvian evangelizing on Camps Bay beach



Dianne, one of our stewards

a spot where we were able to have fruitful conversations with many tourists from overseas. We distributed our tracts at the Adderly Street night market which was packed. We also reached people who attended the cricket match between South Africa and the West Indies. My wife Teresa and I were able to speak to an unsaved young Jewish woman and her boyfriend who came up to ask us about Jesus on the top of Table Mountain!

We finished the outreach with a showing of the powerful video testimony of six Jewish holocaust survivors with the showing of Survivor Stories at Camps Bay United Church. This was well attended with over 190 people cramming the seats. We had a few unsaved Jewish people in the audience that night.

We praise God for what He allowed us to do during that time. We spoke to so many people and made the issue of who Jesus is unavoidable to them. Thank you for standing with us through your prayers and financial support - you helped us make a difference.

### Here are a few highlights from our campaigners:

#### Haddasah:

I was encouraged by this interaction with a young woman named Tristan. As I spoke to her about Jesus, she told me that she just had a dream the night before where she was surrounded by evil and someone told her to leave and follow him. She asked lots of questions and was eager to pray with me. Please pray that this 18-year old will grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus as we follow up with her.

#### Jarred:

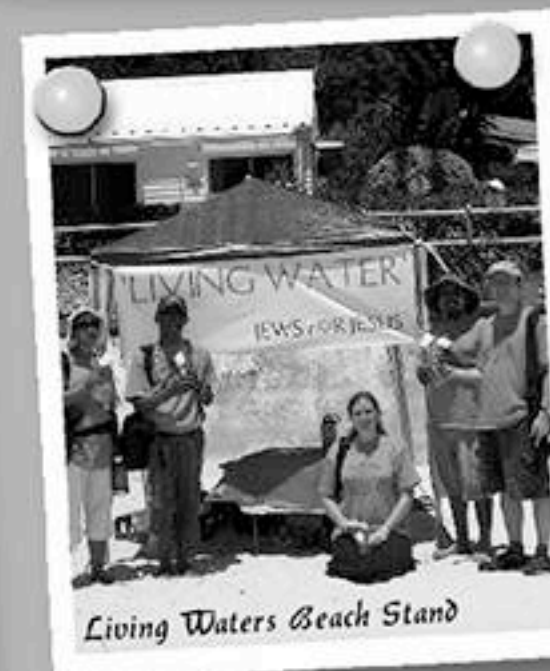
As I passed out gospel tracts at a cricket match, a couple approached me with loud insults. I was feeling shaken and soon after, a big group of Jewish believers passed by and said, "Wow, Jews for Jesus! Praise the Lord!"



Gospel conversation at Greenmarket Square



Leanne shares the gospel in Sea Point



Living Waters Beach Stand

One man encouraged me and said he was very proud of me and what we are doing and to keep up the good work. God is so faithful to uphold us as we serve him! (editor's note: Jarred is legally blind)

#### Haddasah:

I was passing out broadsides in Sea Point when Roy, a Jewish man, approached me and asked if I was Jewish too. When I told him I was a Gentile who loved the Jewish people, he said he was very interested in knowing more about Jesus. He told me that he would never forget what his mother once told him. One day, she looked up from where she was sitting and said, "Jesus must have been the greatest man who ever lived!" Since then, he has been seeking to know more about Jesus and has been reading the Bible and other books about Jesus. When I gave him the booklet about the Gospel of John, *Living Waters*, he was delighted. Please pray for Roy that these seeds would be watered and brought to fruitful faith in his life soon.



Mark handing out water on Clifton Beach



Praise, worship and prayer before going out in the mornings



Teresa at the Survival Stories Event

#### Teresa Sischy:

We were handing out water on Camps Bay beach on New Year's day. I was manning the stall, while the other campaigners carried bottles of water the sun bathers on the beach, with the goal of engaging them in conversation, asking the pivotal question: "Who do you think Jesus is". A young Jewish man approached our stall. He asked whether we were hoping to convert Jewish people. I told him that our purpose was to proclaim that Jesus is the Jewish Messiah.

Robert told me that he is a recovering addict and that for many years he has been trying to fill a gaping void in his life but he has never felt complete. I shared with him about how Y'shua filled my emptiness and forgave my sin. As I spoke with him, Robert said that he would like to find out more. I gave him the gospel of John and he gave me his contact information for further follow-up.

#### Leanne:

It was thrilling for me to be doing street evangelism on New Year's day. Our team went to Camps Bay beach to hand out water again. The beach was full of people and we engaged in several conversations. One Jewish man came out of a restaurant and began waving enthusiastically at me. He was from New York and had seen Jews for Jesus around there a lot and wanted to know what we did. He had never heard anything about Jesus before and was interested in knowing more. He was amazed at our generosity of providing him with free literature and really happy to have spoken to us. We were also able to pray for a woman



A severely vandalised bus shelter

who needed healing in her life. What a blessing it was for me to dedicate this time to God's service and see the impact Jesus makes in peoples' lives. May he continue to work in their hearts even now.



Algvian handing out tracts at the cricket



Algvian, Angela, Leanne, Enzella, Teresa, Eliyah, Haddasah, Mark, Kadav, Jarred, David, Michael (taking the pic)

extremely high in terms of spiritual surrender and living a sanctified life. To acknowledge that Jesus is Lord is to willingly submit ourselves to Him and His will for our lives. And for a Jewish person, add to that the conflict such a commitment to Christ will ignite within their family. For a Jewish person to come to believe that Jesus is Messiah is an acknowledgement that our leaders, our entire community has been wrong for 2000 years! Even if the Church had a spotless image, it is still unlikely that Jews and Gentiles would be flocking to get inside.

Nevertheless, I am sorry to say, a segment of Jewish believers in Jesus desires to disassociate from what they call "the Gentile Church." One Messianic leader recently wrote, "I have never felt entirely comfortable with Christians and over time have had less and less to do with the Church, so that today I have almost no contact and that is the way I prefer it."

I believe this attitude is similar to that of Gentile brothers and sisters whose critique of the Church also takes a form of disassociation. Some Jewish and Gentile believers seek a better image for themselves, or possibly even for Jesus, by distancing themselves from "those people" who are supposedly to blame for the Church's bad image. Some seem to think that by doing so, they can avoid being painted with that broad brush. Perhaps unbelievers will see that they aren't like those other guys, and will be more open to Jesus. Yet Jewish believers in Jesus who distance themselves from other believers have not been able to change the minds of unbelievers about Jesus, and there is a lesson for the broader Church in this.

One individual recently opined that just as "high negatives" prevent certain politicians from being nominated for higher office in their political party, so the "high negatives" of Jews for Jesus compel him to distance himself from us – even denounce us – so everyone knows we do not represent him or his views. What is the response of the Jewish community to this kind of disassociation? In a recent three-part article about the Messianic movement, such efforts were dismissed by unbelieving Jewish leaders. "Though one group may be more hard-sell and the other softersell, they are both equally as reprehensible because they have embraced Jesus as their Messiah," said one Jewish leader.

Believers don't gain "votes" from unbelievers by disassociation – unless it is to disassociate themselves from Jesus Himself. Sadly, that is exactly what has happened to some who disassociated themselves from the Church.

Jesus has His own "image problem" (though it is only a problem for those who are self-righteous). Should we seek to distance ourselves from Him? He came into this world unwelcomed and unwanted. He chose to make statements that seem intended to offend (e.g. John 6:53, "unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you").

Don't get me wrong. I don't mean that we should dismiss legitimate criticism of ourselves as members of Christ's Body. But rather than joining unbelievers in ridiculing the Church, we should be on our knees interceding and doing whatever else we can to improve things.

Our task is not a public relations job where we get people to like Christians so that they will like God. It is to be light in a dark world where people's natural inclination is to hate Jesus because they don't want God intruding in their lives. So it has always been. God called Isaiah to speak to a people who wouldn't listen. He knew Jeremiah was going to be rejected by the people he loved the most. Jesus told us, "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you" (John 15:8).

In Hebrews 13:12-13 we read that we need to be prepared to suffer and bear His reproach.

The attitude of any believer toward the Church should be guided by Jesus' own feelings. How does Jesus feel about the Church? Think about the analogy the Apostle Paul uses: "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish" (Ephesians 5:25-27). This passage speaks to a man's love for his wife, but it also gives us insight into Jesus' love as that of a husband. A husband may be well acquainted with his wife's flaws, but if he truly loves her he will stand with her and defend her honor against anyone who might criticize her, even if there is some truth in the criticism.

Believers might impress one another with clever metaphors about the Church's shortcomings, but do we really believe that Jesus appreciates that kind of wit at his wife's expense? "Well," someone may say, "you don't know how much the Church has hurt me." And I am truly sorry for that hurt, yet I would tell that person (I hope lovingly), "Jesus understands all about hurt. He experienced it to the max so that you and I and every other sinner in the Church could be saved."

Jesus is well aware of the shortcomings of the Church, of the sinful behaviors and sad failures so often pointed out by others. That is why He was willing to die on behalf of His beloved people, both Jews and Gentiles, who make up the Church. Jesus didn't just accept the Church "warts and all." He did what was needed to sanctify her, with the promise that we will be "holy and without blemish." That isn't just an image, it is ultimate reality and should fill us with hope. While the promise is yet to be fully realized, it is as good as done in the plan of God. Don't you want to identify with that great big beautiful reality? ✨

## NEW LIBERATED WAILING WALL RECORDING (Never Forget)

Our new Jewish gospel music recording **Never Forget** sounds just like what you'd expect from the *Liberated Wailing Wall* – and totally different! Many songs present the traditional lively klezmer sound with the Messianic melodies that most want and rightly expect from this longstanding Jewish gospel music team. Yet many of the songs have a fresh, almost edgy, more individual *soul-searching-wouldn't-be-surprised-to-find-this-on-someone's-iPod* sound that reflects the experience and taste of a new and talented generation. If you haven't yet gotten a taste of this album, we have **five sample clips** that you can download to your computer at albums. Even if you are not a buyer of Messianic music, please give a listen to these fresh Scripture-based songs, and pray for God to use this album to touch many hearts for Him. Copies are available at **R80 each** excluding post and packaging. Call our offices for details.



## Prayer Prompters

### Please pray for:

- ✪ Pray for the gospel seed that was spread in Cape Town to bear much fruit. p3
- ✪ Pray for effective follow up for the Living Water outreach. p3
- ✪ Pray for Tristan whom Hadassah met in Cape Town to grow in the Lord. p3
- ✪ Pray for Robert to find wholeness in his Messiah, Jesus. p4
- ✪ Pray for the people that Leanne and Michael spoke with to find the Living Water in Y'shua. p4
- ✪ Pray that we may grow in grace and truth with each other as a body of believers "warts and all". p1 and p2

### THAT'S JUST MOISHE...



## Behold Your God Israel:

This year will see the first of our Behold Your God campaigns in Israel. Please pray for wisdom, strength and grace as we face many decisions. Please pray for God to prepare many hearts to receive the gospel.

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



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