

JEW[☆] FOR JESUS

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A Humble Invasion

by David Brickner, Executive Director

Former Prime Minister of Israel Golda Meir once admonished someone, “*Stop trying to be humble, you’re not that good.*” It is true that efforts to show humility often have the opposite effect. I recently read a book that perfectly demonstrated this phenomenon.

The author began by putting himself forward as the best example of his own ideas. Then, seemingly to appear humble, he repeatedly deprecated himself – which kept him at the centre of attention. It was anything but humble.

A false understanding of humility, along with a startling absence of the real thing, pervades our society. This is due, in part, from a paralysis in our culture’s understanding of truth.

Humility is based on a realistic perception of one’s self in relation to the truth about who God is and what He has done for us. But society does not allow for the existence of “the truth about who God is” much less the gospel of what He has done for us.

Anyone who claims to make true statements about God is perceived as arrogant and intolerant. Therefore one can’t possibly express conviction and confidence in truth and be considered humble. It follows that uncertainty and doubt appear more humble – but it is a hollow humility, empty of understanding and therefore without substance.

Many Christians have a growing sense of hand-wringing uncertainty over how to express our convictions without engendering accusations of arrogance. Well, what if that is not



possible? Michael Horton has written, “While in the past, humility was the opposite of pride, in modernity it has become the opposite of conviction. . . .”¹ Anyone who has stood for the truth knows Horton is right on the mark.

This twisted notion of humility has hamstrung many in the Church but it need not do so – if we will only realize that being humble is more

important than the appearance of humility. It is pride that makes us insist upon being considered humble. A person of true humility is willing to be thought arrogant for the sake of the gospel and for those who need to hear it.

This month we celebrate powerful events of astounding humility that produced strong conviction and acts of outstanding courage. While December 25 marks the celebration of Christmas, December 4th is the first day of Hanukkah. The story of Hanukkah is not often associated with humility, though it should be. In the last few centuries before Christ’s coming,

the underpinnings of Jewish society were terribly weakened through moral and spiritual compromise. Many Jewish people were Hellenized, abandoning God and Torah in favour of the “sophistication” of Athens and the entertainment and culture of the “gymnasium.” Then came the invasion of the Syrians who made biblical faith illegal and rewarded those Jews who

Continued on page 2: A Humble Invasion

embraced Greek religious practices and moral values. The tide turned when a confrontation occurred between Syria's soldiers and a family of Jews in the tiny village of Modin. In righteous indignation, the Jewish family rose up against these Hellenistic ways. These Maccabees, as they came to be known, risked everything – life and limb, home and family, for the sake of God and His Word. Ultimately God gave them victory over the Syrians. Hanukkah commemorates that victory. How can rebellion be an act of humility? When it comes from genuine submission to the will and Word of God. I am not trying to develop a Messianic Jewish spin on the "just war" theory. I only want to say that it is not arrogant for believers in Jesus to stand firmly for truth in the midst of a society that is increasingly hostile to God's Kingdom. Some Christians are embarrassed by what they perceive as the arrogance of those who are forcefully standing for their convictions. Perhaps their concerns are more about style than substance, but it seems to me that a false sense of humility will sideline Christian conviction at a time when it is most needed. Commitment to humility requires that, as we assert our convictions, we also reflect the character of the One who set the example in His Incarnation:

"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it

robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men"
(Philippians 2:5-7).

It is easy to associate the Incarnation with humility because of the circumstances of Christ's birth. He was born in a dirty, smelly manger, a feed trough for barnyard animals. He was born to a poor family from an oppressed people in a backwater part of the world. But these were just the "tip of the iceberg" of a much greater and deeper display of

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humility. In a demonstration of divine power and strength, the Son of God took on the weakness of human flesh. It was a humble invasion that changed the course of human history. It was D-Day in God's military strategy to defeat Satan and rescue us prisoners of war.

Imagine the strength of conviction it took for Jesus to commit Himself to such a course of action. That is what Jesus did when He humbled Himself. Paul tells us that humility should likewise be in us as it was in Christ Jesus. The Incarnation was hardly a weak or indecisive move

on God's part. It takes courage to be humble. Genuine humility calls on us to risk our own safety and self-protection in the interest of others and of God's will. Humility is not the absence of conviction but the strength of faith to believe God and risk all for His name.

Humility is a call to arms in God's redemptive purposes. It is not about our rightness, but Jesus' righteousness and His Lordship in our lives. Humility is faithfulness to God's truth and to the life He calls us to live for His glory. At this Christmas season it is most appropriate for us to rededicate ourselves to being part of God's invasion task force. Like Christ we must be willing to humble ourselves, be willing to sacrifice convenience and comfort and be willing to risk our own reputation for His. What steps, what risks will we take to bring His message of love to those around us, to accomplish God's purposes of redemption in their lives? I am reminded of the words of

that famous Christmas carol, *"O come all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant."*

Can faithfulness to and humility before God be triumphant? It was the triumph of joyful, godly humility that led Y'shua (Jesus) to become man so long ago. It is our joyful response to His example that still calls the faithful today,

"Come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem."

Note
1. Michael, Horton, "Settlers, Pilgrims, and Wanderers," *Modern Reformation* 14:4 (July/August 2005) p.23. [;:]

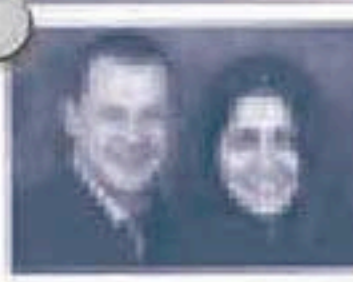
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WE EXIST TO MAKE THE MESSIAHSHIP OF JESUS AN UNAVOIDABLE ISSUE TO OUR JEWISH PEOPLE WORLDWIDE



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MEET OUR TRAINEES



Each group of trainees is unique, just as any person is unique – but this semester's trainees perhaps more so than others.

We have two couples from three countries, all of whom speak fluent Hebrew and have lived in Israel. They present quite a mix of cultures and personalities!

Here's a chance for you to get to know these two couples a little better.



Yarden Nasser

I was born in a small town in Ukraine to a Jewish father and Gentile mother. When I was seven years old, my mother came to faith in Jesus and began taking my older brother and me to church. I grew up knowing about God but not really understanding much about who Jesus was.

Through my grandmother I learned about my Jewish heritage and culture and became interested in Israel. As a teenager I was focused mainly on myself...yet I began to feel that God was going to change my life in a way I could not predict.

I made *aliyah* (moved to Israel) when I was 15, without my parents. Once there, I went to a religious school for three years. At first, living in my new country was fun, an adventure – but after a while I grew lonely and depressed. I missed my parents and began to remember what my mother had tried to teach me about Jesus. I asked my teachers and friends why we were not supposed to believe in Him. Their answers did not satisfy me, so I began to search the Old Testament, looking for the promises about the Messiah. My search sometimes kept me awake at night but I would not stop until I found the answer.

When I did find the answer I was so happy to know the truth of the Messiah. Even though my mother had believed and told me about Him, I felt I had discovered something brand new. Right away I began to share the good news with my teachers and friends, who thought I had lost my mind. The rabbi at the school told me that if I persisted in this, he would not allow me to pass my final (oral) exam after three years of studying.

It felt like I was the only Jewish believer in Jesus in all of Israel, but I prayed that God would help me find others. One day I saw a lady on the street passing out some kind of literature. It turned out to be invitations to her church and when I attended the following week I was amazed to find many more Jewish believers in Jesus.

Back at school I had to take my final exam. I responded well to all the rabbi's questions and was about to pass when finally he asked me about Jesus. "I believe He is the Messiah," I replied. The rabbi told me with regret that he could not pass me – but I know that I passed the exam of faith. I joined the national service and worked as a doctor's secretary, and the Lord opened doors for me to share my faith and meet other believers. I started to evangelize on the streets with other believers whenever I had the chance – and that is how I met my husband-to-be.



Peter Nasser

Many people are surprised to find that an Arab and a Jew can live together peacefully and I, too, would have been surprised at one time. But with Christ, all things are possible!

I grew up in a small Arab village. Both my parents are Christians and we went to church every Sunday. We rarely were in contact with Jewish people and I did not

think much about them – until I moved to "the big city."

I was often treated with fear or suspicion and always it seemed at some point in every day I was regarded as a terrorist or friend of terrorists. Of course the fact that I was raised in a Christian family was not known and I was not living a life in keeping with that upbringing. I rarely prayed or consulted God about my life, yet I was angry with Him for abandoning me (so it seemed) in the midst of people who did not respect me.

I spent some time in Switzerland where I met a woman, fell in love, and planned to marry. When we returned to Israel, things changed and the relationship fell apart.

I left Israel, angry and depressed, but the God of Israel never left me. I flew to Australia hoping to start a new life. I'd been offered a job there from a man who turned out to be a liar and a thief. He stole pretty much all I had and left me on the street. God had mercy on me and a Christian evangelist helped me through this time. I was able to get to New Zealand where I did start a new life, but not in the way I expected.

My brother was living in New Zealand. He and other believers challenged me to turn to God. It was the right time for me; there was no other answer to my problems. As I trusted Jesus with my hurts and my anger, forgiveness flowed through me. And as I was forgiven, I was able to forgive others. To my surprise I began to feel a love for Jewish people I had not known before and I sensed that God wanted me to go back to Israel.

There I began to meet Jewish believers in Jesus and to evangelize with them. At a festival in Akko, I was the only Arab on the evangelism team. Yarden was witnessing to some Arabs, and someone pointed her to me to help with translation. Our love for Jesus and desire to tell others about Him brought us together. When we were engaged, we were invited to participate in a 2005 Behold Your God campaign in France. There I learned more about the goals and practices of Jews for Jesus, and once more I found Jewish people who were like-minded about Jesus and the need to tell others about Him. When I tell Jewish people, "My faith in Jesus is coming from your Tenach, [Bible]" and I begin to show them prophecies, they'll say, "We're Jewish and we don't know these things. How do you know these things?"

When it comes up that I'm married to a Jewish woman, some are incredulous. They wonder why she would marry me or why I would

marry her. I say, "It's God's plan for us. I love Jews and she loves Arabs and we have peace with each other." Together we are a testimony that Jesus truly is the Prince of Peace.

If you would like to read more about Peter and Yarden, go to: http://www.jewsforjesus.org/publications/havurah/10_03/04 There you will find an article from Havurah, our publication for Jewish believers in Jesus.



Jason Verreyne

I am a South African married to an Israeli who is Jewish and believes in Jesus. I never thought I would be married to a "foreigner," let alone a Jewish foreigner, as I grew up in a culture not known for warmly embracing people of other cultures.

Therefore it may seem strange that in 1996 I decided to become a volunteer on a kibbutz in Israel. Friends of mine had lived on a kibbutz and told me that it was a great experience so I was eager to try it myself. I was 22 years old.

My mum is a strong believer, so I knew that God existed, and I even knew that Jesus was His Son, but it did not really interest me. I respected people who had what I would have called "religion," but I enjoyed a lifestyle of parties and alcohol that left no room for God and His purposes in my life.

Soon after arriving on the kibbutz I met Carmit, who was my supervisor and unknown to me, my wife to be. We married eight months later, with her family's blessing, and lived in Israel for several years. Our first child was born in Israel.

Though Carmit was from a traditional Jewish background and I came from a Christian home, God was not part of our lives. We did not think we needed Him and we had no desire for Him. However, in 2002 we moved

back to South Africa. Carmit's family warned her that once there, she had better keep a very close watch and make sure that no one tried to baptize the children or make them into Christians. My mother is a praying woman and I'm sure it was due to her prayers that I began attending services at one of the local churches, for while it would have been an odd thing to do in Israel, it seemed perfectly natural back in my home country. The more I went to church, the more I felt drawn to God and I realized I wanted to give my life to Him. However, I was hesitant because of my wife.

My going to church had already begun to create problems in our marriage. By now our second child had been born, and as my faith grew stronger each day, my wife became more and more agitated. She had been warned in Israel about this sort of thing and now it seemed her worst fears were coming to pass. The mere mention of Jesus was enough to offend, upset and start her crying. She reminded me time and time again that Jews do not believe in Jesus, that our children were Jewish, and she insisted that I would only teach them about Jesus over her dead body.

But I knew that God was calling me and finally I was baptized and publicly professed my faith. To Carmit, this was the final blow. We sometimes went for weeks on end barely speaking to each other because of the tension over my faith.

I prayed for her and asked God to soften her heart. He answered in an amazing way. Carmit's father came to visit us in South Africa and we went on holiday together with him to Durban. While there, an older woman overheard him speaking to Carmit in Hebrew. She was so excited, she began chatting with us. It had been many years, she said, since she had heard Hebrew. Her name was Elisheva, she was Jewish and told us if ever we were in her town, to be in touch. I looked at her address, and it turned out that she lived in the same town as we did.

Elisheva and Carmit became friends. Carmit confided to her that she was thinking of taking the children and leaving me. Elisheva urged her not to do anything drastic. And then...she explained to Carmit that she, too, was a believer in Jesus!

She invited Carmit to lunch with another believing friend and they had a lovely time. After lunch, the two older women asked Carmit if they could pray for her. Feeling it would be impolite to refuse, Carmit found herself on her knees with two older ladies who prayed impassioned prayers for her – and prayed to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. After half an hour of this, they indicated it was her turn.

Poor Carmit! She later told me, "I had no idea what I was going to say but I thought whatever it was it had better be in Hebrew because I don't want these women to understand me. And so I prayed, 'God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, if you are real and if Jesus is who these women say He is, show me.'"

It was not a prayer out of a sincerely searching heart. It was a challenge. But from that day forward, God gave Carmit a hunger to know the truth.

I cannot tell you how astonished I was when Carmit came to me one day and told me she wanted to be baptized. "But you must believe in Jesus to be baptized," I told her. "I do believe in Jesus," she told me, and I can hardly tell you the joy and relief I felt. That was two years ago.

Carmit looks after our daughters, Nicole and Kimberly and is unable to undergo the full training. She is eager to attend as many of the classes as the girls' schedule permits and has been fully supportive of my desire to be an outreach worker. She says, "If God could change my heart, I know He can change other hearts – even those of my family and friends." She is excited that together we will have opportunities to be used by God to make a difference in many lives.

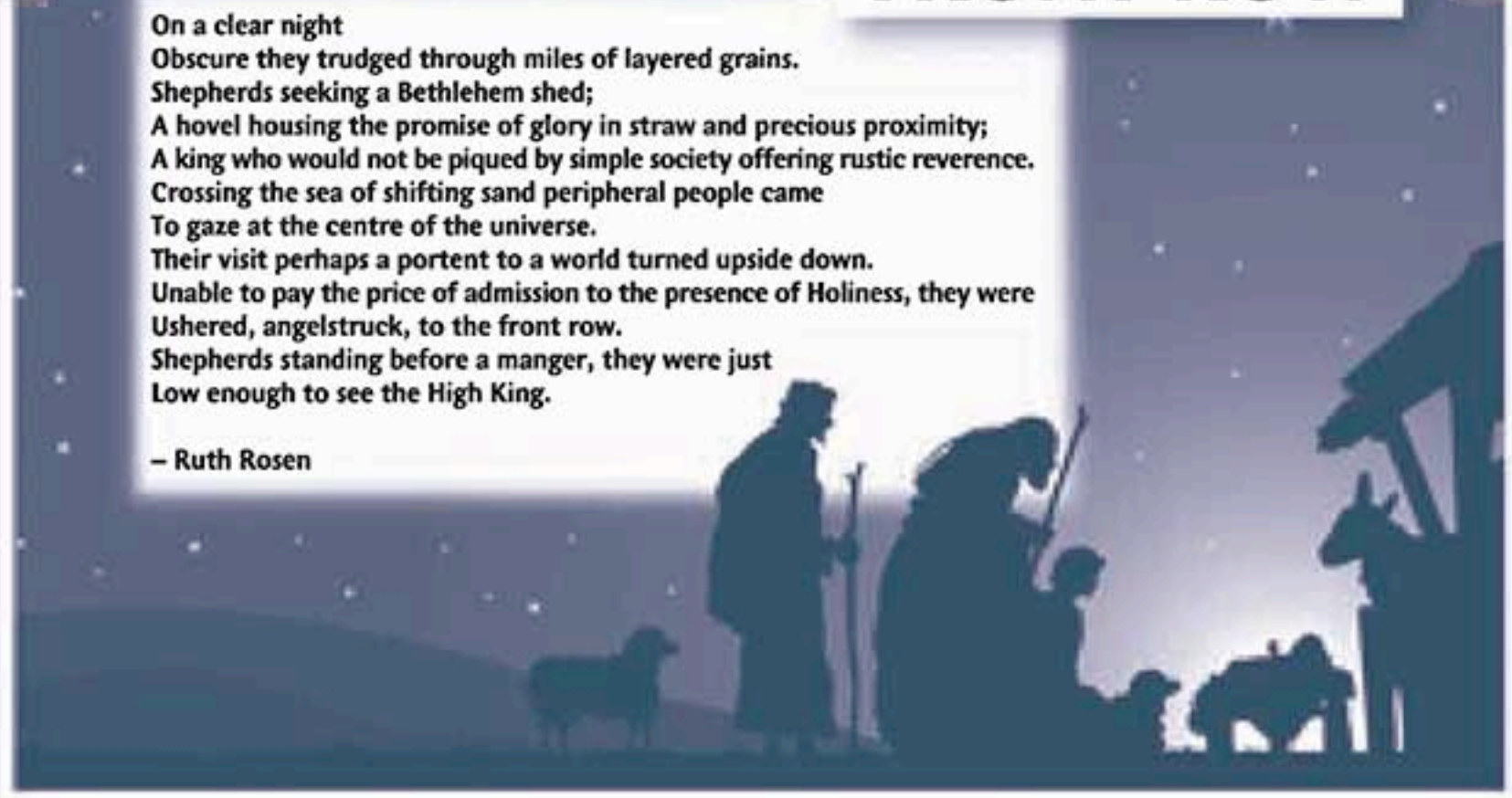
Our bus shelter gospel proclamation advertising has recently been receiving some media attention. Please pray for its continued effectiveness and protection.



FRONT ROW

On a clear night
 Obscure they trudged through miles of layered grains.
 Shepherds seeking a Bethlehem shed;
 A hovel housing the promise of glory in straw and precious proximity;
 A king who would not be piqued by simple society offering rustic reverence.
 Crossing the sea of shifting sand peripheral people came
 To gaze at the centre of the universe.
 Their visit perhaps a portent to a world turned upside down.
 Unable to pay the price of admission to the presence of Holiness, they were
 Ushered, angelstruck, to the front row.
 Shepherds standing before a manger, they were just
 Low enough to see the High King.

– Ruth Rosen



MERRY MESSIAHMAS!

Thank you for helping us to offer God's great gift of salvation to Jews and Gentiles!



MOISHE'S MUSINGS

by Moishe Rosen, Jews for Jesus Founder

Calvary not an isolated event

The following was adapted from one of Moishe's leadership lessons.

If Calvary was an isolated event, it would be an episode of horror in the history of humanity; a shocker and an ignoble end to a noble man. But of course, Calvary is not an isolated event, and it's certainly not the end, for Christ is risen indeed. Calvary is a picture, a projection, an image that Jesus described when He said,

"And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself"
(John 12:32).

Jesus compared the image of His being lifted up with the image of Moses lifting up the serpent in the wilderness (John 3:14). At Calvary we have a picture of the effect of sin, and those who looked to Jesus were healed of sin.

The crucifixion has been the image that attracts sinful humanity to the Saviour. There's a saying that you can catch more flies with honey than with vinegar. For those who wish to accumulate flies, that's great advice. But that which is sweet to sinful persons only has momentary appeal. How long do you savour a candy bar? How long do you remember a tooth ache? All bright and beautiful things give a momentary impression, while the images of pain press and impress.

Pain can be endured if it has meaning. You can endure difficulties if they serve a purpose. To understand the meaning of life, we must gaze at death. The image of the cross is not one of passive

resignation to pain. Yes, it is a matter of acceptance, but not with resignation. It is the Almighty Son of God defiantly telling sin to do its worst. The image of God at Calvary draws people; it is not sweetness and light, but a darkly etched event against a light background.

When Jews for Jesus began, I was under much pressure from others to "be nice," to fit in, and not to stir up trouble. If I had given in to that pressure, Jews for Jesus would not exist.

Image is important; it's what people see. Let's hope that what people see in us will arrest their attention and cause them to consider Calvary and the image of Jesus, lifted up for the salvation of all who would believe.

TEST YOUR YIDDISHKEIT*

(*Jewishness)

What does the word "Hanukkah" mean?

Why are there so many ways to spell it? (Hannukah, Hanukkah, Chanuka, Chanukah, etc.)

What are Maccabees? (rhymes with whack-the-knees)



What are dreidels? (rhymes with grey-gulls)



What are latkes? (rhymes with not-guss or got-keys, depending on how you were raised)

Why does Hanukkah last for eight days?

Where in the Bible is Hanukkah mentioned?

When is Hanukkah this year?

Answers on page 6.

Answers to Test Your Yiddishkeit:

Hanukkah means "dedication." There are many ways to spell it because it's a transliteration of a Hebrew word and there is more than one way to use the English alphabet to try to make the Hebrew sounds.

The Maccabees were the band of Jewish guerilla fighters who God used to preserve and protect His people from the army of Antiochus Epiphane.

Dreidels are four-sided tops used for a traditional game at Hanukkah.

Latkes are delicious potato pancakes, fried in oil.

Hanukkah lasts for eight days because it was originally held as a "late" observance of the Feast of Tabernacles, also an eight-day festival. According to legend, at the first celebration when the idolaters were driven out and the Temple was ready to be rededicated, there was only enough consecrated oil to burn for one day. Yet miraculously, it continued to burn for seven more days, until more oil could be procured.

As for where **Hanukkah** is mentioned in the Bible, it's a bit of a trick question. The events that **Hanukkah** commemorates occurred during the period between the Old and New Testaments, so the story of **Hanukkah** is not recorded in Scripture at all. Some of the events surrounding it were predicted by the prophet Daniel (*Daniel 11*). There is one specific mention of the festival, and that is in the Gospel of John:

"Now it was the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem, and it was winter. And Jesus walked in the temple, in Solomon's porch".
(John 10:22-23)

Hannukah begins this year at sundown on December 4. Sending **Hanukkah** cards to your Jewish friends is a great way to show you care.

For more information and free Hanukkah e-cards, go to: <http://jewsforjesus.org/judaica/hanukkah>