

This month Israel is celebrating 63 years as a modern state. “Yom HaAtzma’ut” (Israel’s national Independence Day) falls on May 9. With so much unrest in the Middle East and all the uprisings various countries have experienced over the last several months, one can only hope and pray for Israel to be joined by emerging democracies in the region. Perhaps there will be more Independence Day celebrations to come.

But celebrating independence can mask a problem that Israel, and in fact all countries experience when seeking the freedoms that so many western democracies enjoy. Winston Churchill once observed that democracy is the worst form of government—except all the others that have been tried. As important as independence and democracy are, no type of government or politician can ever provide real and lasting solutions to the problems people and nations face in the Middle East and elsewhere.

Independence and democracy can promote human rights, including the blessings of freedom of religion and freedom of speech. But rather than taking advantage of those freedoms to love and serve God, all too often people use their freedom to disconnect from our Creator and assert independence from accountability to the King of the Universe.

We should want so much more than independence and democracy. The longing of Jesus’ people for a heavenly home is not a hunger for democracy but the God-given desire for His rule and reign; to live under the only truly benevolent dictatorship, that of our Lord Jesus.



An Independence Problem



David Brickner

Executive Director,
San Francisco USA

Bits from the (other) branches

PHOENIX

Bruce Rapp reports, "I've been meeting with Joe, a retired policeman who served for 32 years on the NYPD. He also went to Israel in 1973 to help during the 'Yom Kippur War.'

"For many years, Joe did not believe in God, mostly because of all the evil in the world. Only in these last years has he begun to believe that God is real and has been watching over him. But Y'shua, Jesus? That was a stretch for Joe. When we talked, he'd look down and say how religion has been the cause of so much conflict in the world. As I listened, I would silently pray, 'God help me to show him Your love for him and how You sent Your Son to take on the sins of the world.'

"Finally I touched his hand and asked him to look at me. His eyes met mine and I began to say how it wasn't about religion, but at this moment it was about him and his relationship with God. Joe continued to look at me, and I found the words begin to come. God enabled me to speak into his heart and tell what Y'shua had done for him.

"Joe got it! He nodded his head in agreement, and when I asked him if he wanted to reconcile with God and receive Y'shua, he said yes! After he prayed, his eyes welled up with tears, he said he felt a great heaviness lifted from him. Please pray for Joe as I continue to meet with him, and try to help him to get connected with a messianic congregation not far from his home."

JEW
FOR
JESUS

MONTRÉAL

Karl deSouza reports, "I met David five months ago at a local mall during our Christmas Outreach. He was glad to see us and told me he had just started to believe in Jesus as the Messiah about a month earlier.

"We followed up with a meeting at that same mall. David explained how he'd been raised in a religious home, went to Jewish school, and had never considered Jesus until a Christian couple shared the Gospel with him and invited him to church. He had come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah but didn't believe He is God. We studied Zechariah 12, where God is seen and 'pierced,' and related it to its New Testament fulfillment in John 19:37 and Revelation 1:7-8. David exclaimed, 'I believe it!' We looked at other passages like Isaiah 9:6-7 and considered the titles of Messiah, some of which are completely inappropriate for a mere human being. David prayed to turn from his sins and received Y'shua as his Messiah, Saviour, and God. Please pray for him in his new walk with the Lord and that his family would be open to Y'shua."

TORONTO

Laura Barron gives an update on Kathy, whom she asked prayer for in the March Newsletter. "When I first met Kathy, she had so many questions about faith in Jesus and whenever we talked, she brought her list for me to answer. During one of our visits, I could tell that it wasn't so much the questions keeping her from Jesus but more a fear of her what it would mean for relationships with her Jewish family and community.

She came to my house a couple of weeks ago for a Shabbat fellowship and she was talking as if she was already a believer in Y'shua. She even broke off a relationship with a man who 'wasn't going in the same spiritual direction' as she was!

The next time I contacted her she told me that she had been going to some Bible studies and when someone asked her if she was a follower of Jesus and she surprised herself by replying, 'Yes!' When I asked her if she had verbally offered her life to the Lord and asked him to forgive her sins, she wondered if she had to make a formal appointment at a church to do that. She was delighted when she realized that she could confess her faith right on the phone with me. Please pray that she will grow and that God will continue to bless her with fellowship."

Right: The original Camp Gilgal East boys in 1991.
Below: Liz with one of her students at a Bat Mitzvah in 2010.



JEW
FOR
JESUS

generation

TO

I was a Camp Gilgal camper. Now I'm a Camp Gilgal director. And I have heard it said time and again that "Children's ministry takes so much patience. It can be that you invest for years and years before you see any fruit." I have tried my best to take this to heart and to trust that God's Spirit is working. As I gear up for this year's summer camp, I can say that it's been worth the wait.

Our last season of camp was our twentieth year. Twenty years is a milestone, and I'd like to share a few of the fruit-bearing stories from last year, hoping it will encourage you to pray for us this year.

Johannah was in her fifth and final year of Junior Camp. Two summers previously, she was questioning whether God was really good or not. She wasn't sure if she really believed in Y'shua, or that He would or could forgive her sins. At the end of that session of camp, she recommitted her life to the Lord. I was unsure of what that decision meant to her at the time, but I had the opportunity to learn the rest of the story last year. Johannah asked if I remembered how she had struggled with her faith two years earlier. I did. She told me that since her recommitment at camp she's seen how she has grown in her faith. She has been learning to trust God and is seeking Him for the direction her life should take. It was amazing to hear a twelve-year-old articulate her process of faith so clearly. It was also



an encouragement and reminder to me to see that the decisions the kids make at camp shape the direction of their lives.

One of our long-time campers, Josh, began attending camp as an 8-year-old. At 17, he was in his last year as a camper and hoping to stay involved as an assistant tribe leader (camp counselor). He described the position as a combination of a big brother and someone who could provide spiritual guidance. When interviewed for the position he said the idea of being an assistant tribe leader was exciting to him because "it represents a real transition from being a camper to making camp about other people, to give back to the program that was instrumental to my faith. I am excited

Campers lead in a group gathering.

to be able to inherit the charge and be part of the cycle of camp." What Josh said about giving back to the program, and making camp about other people is evidence of the spiritual growth that has taken place in his life.

At Adventure Camp, I had a series of conversations with a camper named Josiah. He has also been a camper since he was 8 years old, and a few years ago I had the opportunity to disciple and train him for his Bar Mitzvah. Though he is from a believing family, Josiah's faith hadn't yet flourished. He'd attended our Adventure Camp the previous year, and seemed pretty unplugged from the spiritual aspects of the program.

Jewish believing campers and counselors and assistants share together in the cabin and outside for the camera.



generation

By Liz Goldstein

He wasn't going to come back the following year, but changed his mind. One day, he and I were canoe buddies and talked the whole day as we paddled through the Adirondacks. Over the rest of camp, we got into all sorts of spiritual conversations, and usually other campers were around and part of the discussion too. One of the other guys, David, was telling us about the process he went through when he was 12 to 13 to understand his faith for himself, and not just because it's what his parents believe. David had read a lot of apologetics books and came out on the other side with a firm foundation for his faith. The next conversation I had with Josiah ended with him asking if I would resume meeting with him after camp so we could read through different apologetics books together, which we've been doing. He's been eager to understand more about faith in Jesus and why he believes what he believes and seems closer to wanting

to please God.

Through the ministry of Camp Gilgal, many young Jewish people have found their identity as Jewish people encouraged and affirmed, and they have found a place for their faith in Y'shua to be challenged for growth. We have had more than 20 years to invest in future generations of Jewish believers in Messiah (myself included!) and I'm looking forward to seeing more and more fruit from these first 20 years, and what's to come from the next 20 years!

Liz Goldstein is part of our New York branch. She not only grew up in Camp Gilgal, but she also grew up as an "MK;" her parents, Marcia and Baruch Goldstein, helped to found the ministry of Jews for Jesus.



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Messianic Resources



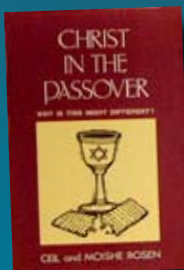
As opportunities arise to share the Gospel with your friends and neighbours, these resources may be very useful. It's always good to have a supply of items which you can pass on to enquirers and which will also build you up in your growth in Messiah.

Featured resources for your learning, celebrating, and growth

Christ in the Passover

The original book by Moïse and Ceil Rosen on "Christ in the Passover". If you want his commentary on the Jewish Passover and how the elements of modern usage point us to Messiah Jesus, if you want the history of the event recorded in Exodus 12, this is the book.

Cost \$17

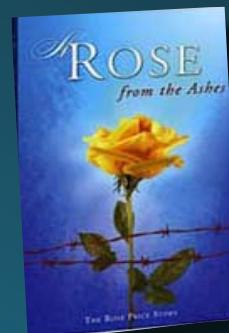


Rose from the Ashes

by Rose Price

Contains the gripping details of Rose Price's childhood in Skarzysko, Poland, her harrowing experiences in Nazi concentration camps, her liberation and the twists and turns of building a new life in the United States.

The true story of how this Holocaust survivor came to believe in Jesus and became a spokeswoman for reconciliation before huge audiences in Germany is a drama of epic proportions-yet it is personal enough to speak into the life of any reader who has struggled with issues of forgiveness.



Cost \$17

Jesus was a Jew

by Arnold Fruchtenbaum

Jewish lives that have been changed by Jesus all testify that not only did

Jesus enhance their Jewishness, but that Jesus is the Jew's Jew. Why, then, do so many Jewish people not believe in Jesus and even object to the messiahship of Jesus? Biblical answers and many testimonies included.

Cost \$18



CD: Desert Rain

by Paul Wilbur

Recorded LIVE in the desert of En Gedi on the banks of the Dead Sea in Israel, DESERT RAIN is a vibrant worship experience featuring some of the best Messianic songs of our day. Recorded during the Feast of Tabernacles, Paul Wilbur and over 5000 worshipers gathered to sing over the nation of Israel and pray for healing rain that would bring new life to dry hearts and desert lands.



Cost \$34

Star of David and Cross Necklace

This Star of David pendant features a star and cross design made from 100% lead-free pewter and plated in 22Kt gold. 1" H x 7/8" W. 24 inch curb chain.

Cost \$44



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