

# From Kiev with Love

I was nine years old when the Chernobyl disaster hit. Everyone in Kiev was affected by it. The government hid all information from the population, so we continued to go outside and walk in the forests where the air and trees were contaminated. It was only after several weeks that the children were evacuated; I was taken to the Crimea for two or three months. Many people died back then and many continue to die from different forms of cancer.

We all know that our long-term health has been affected, and that our children will suffer too. We simply try to get on with living and not think about it too much.

If you visited Kiev, you would quickly notice that people don't have much, as compared to your country. Some of our elderly die from neglect and malnutrition because they don't have children to support them in their old age. Everybody is preoccupied with his or her own problems. Nobody would smile at a stranger in the street—people would think such a person was crazy. This affects people's attitudes toward life: they feel they have only themselves to rely upon; they can't trust anybody and it makes them very unhappy.

Another difference is that Jews like myself and my family, who were brought up under communism, did not have the traditional Jewish taboos regarding Jesus. Most of us simply did not (and many still do not) believe in God at all.

Imagine, then, how strange it is for people on the streets of Kiev to see a Jews for Jesus missionary smile and offer them a tract on the streets—and to hear an encouraging word about the living God who loves them!

As Jews for Jesus we are already an oddity merely because of our background and belief. How much odder we seem to strangers because of our commitment to demonstrate God's love via street evangelism. While many are wary or suspicious, others are eager to know why we should smile, and why we should care to talk to them. Another difference is the accessibility of the Scriptures, though that has changed somewhat. When I came to know the Lord, it was impossible to buy Bibles in the former

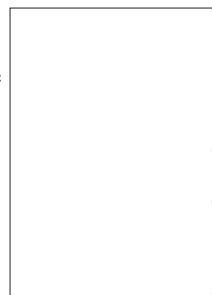
Soviet Union. Churches had to acquire them secretly. My first Bible was supplied by an organization called The Society for the Distribution of the Hebrew Scriptures.

Speaking of that organization, I had a lovely encounter in England last spring as I was there to present "Christ in the Passover" at various churches. A father and daughter traveled a long distance to meet me at one of the church presentations. I was surprised and excited when the man told me that he had been a long-time supporter of The Society for the Distribution of the Hebrew Scriptures. I was face-to-face with a man who had helped make it possible for me to have a Bible of my own. His face shone when I explained what a blessing he had been to me.

I encourage you all to trust God in leading you. Wherever you are from and whatever way He chooses to use you, you can be sure that your service to Him will not return void.

*Ed: I couldn't help imagining that one of our Jews for Jesus readers, maybe even you, might one day meet a Jewish believer from Russia or Ukraine and introduce yourself as a long-time supporter of our ministry. And what a blessing it would be if that believer could tell you in return that it was a Jews for Jesus missionary who led him or her to Christ. We may not have that happen here, but I do know that when we are in heaven, we will meet many people whose lives we touched, through prayer, through supporting those who witnessed to them and many other avenues we may not even realize. Won't that be fun!*

From time to time we share stories from our brothers and sisters in Moscow, Odessa, Kharkov, Dnepropetrovsk and Kiev. This month we thought we would introduce you to Irina Volodarska, a Jewish believer working with our Kiev branch. Originally from Chernobyl, she provides insight into life in Ukraine, as well as what a small world it is for the family of Jews and Gentiles in Christ.



# JEW S F ⋆ R JESUS

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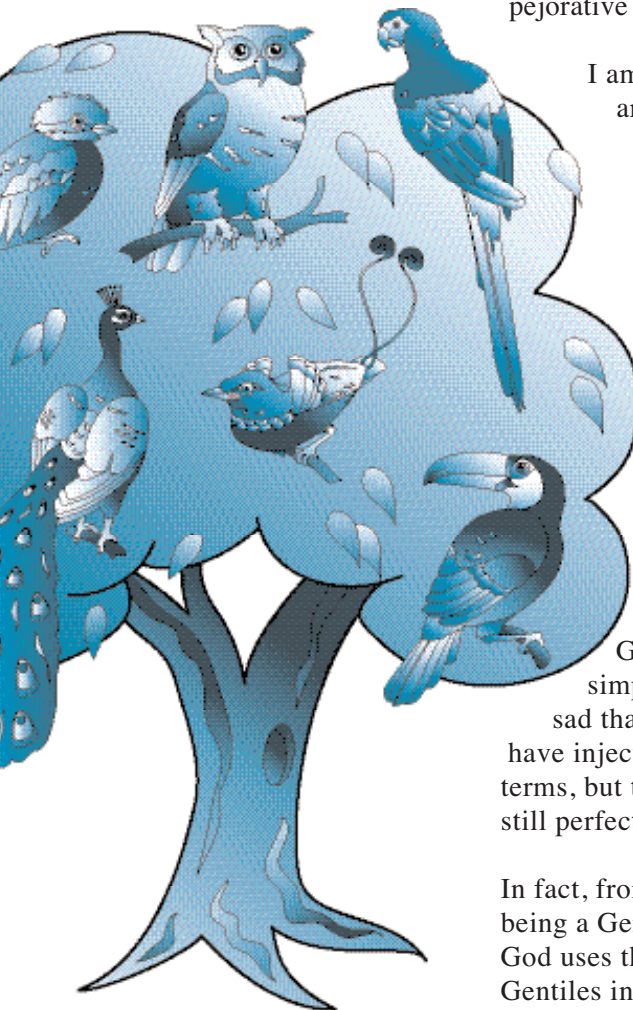
## Philo-Gentilism? *by David Brickner, Executive Director*

**T**he special appreciation and respect that some feel for Jewish people is sometimes called “philo-Semitism,” philo being derived from the Greek word *phileo*, to love. Philo-Semites have a great interest in Jewish history as well as admiration for Jewish culture. And while some people’s idea of respect and admiration of the Jewish people misinforms them on the critical issue of the Jewish people’s need for Christ, true love for Jewish people produces in Christians a willingness to risk personal friendships in order to share Jesus as best they can with their Jewish friends.

That kind of philo-Semitism may be rare in some corners of the world, yet I’ve witnessed it time and time again through many of you, and I thank God for you.

But what about philo-Gentilism? There’s a phrase you don’t hear every day . . . I suppose I may have coined the phrase, but the concept behind it is God’s. And it bears some reflection in response to an attitude that often puzzles me: a peculiar aversion that some Christians have to being identified as Gentiles.

Some have objected to the use of the term “Gentile” in our newsletter articles, pointing out that, “. . . in Christ there is neither Jew nor Gentile . . .” (Galatians 3:28). To which we usually respond that the



*If you have thought  
that being a Gentile is not all  
that special, think again.  
God prizes diversity, as you can  
see throughout His creation.*

same passage also says in Christ there is neither male nor female yet we still maintain separate lavatories among other things. Others find the word Gentile (or its Hebrew equivalent, *goy*) offensive because

they have heard it used as a pejorative term.

I am sorry to say that Jews are not immune from the same kinds of prejudice that afflict other people, including those who use the term “Jew” in a derogatory manner. While, the terms “Jew” and “Gentile” are not negative, the tone and attitude of the people using them can be. After all, Jew (*yehudi* in Hebrew) means “a praise to God.” Gentile (*goy* in Hebrew) simply means “nation.” It is sad that some Gentiles and Jews have injected hostility into these terms, but the words themselves are still perfectly good.

In fact, from God’s perspective, being a Gentile is a very good thing. God uses the terms Jews and Gentiles in the Bible to describe His love for all people. And since God loves Gentiles as much as He does, I think it is altogether appropriate for me to be a philo-Gentile. And when I describe myself as a philo-Gentile I can smile at the “proof” of the matter, since I happened to have married a Gentile.

But all personal issues aside, God’s love for Gentiles deserves far more emphasis. Just as it may be more appropriate for Gentile Christians to speak passionately of God’s love for Jews, perhaps it is time for Jews who

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love Jesus to speak passionately of God's love for Gentiles.

It was because God loves Gentiles that he called a man named Abraham and promised him, ". . . in you all the families of the earth will be blessed . . ." (Genesis 12:3). It was that very same love which provided impetus for the coming of Israel's Messiah. It would never have been enough for God to send a Messiah for Jews only. He spoke of the Messiah through Isaiah saying " 'It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob, And to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, That You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth'" (Isaiah 49:6).

Recently I had an opportunity to speak about the gospel to an Orthodox rabbi in Paris, France. As we sat in his office I pointed out that because of Y'shua (Jesus), millions of people from among the *goyim* (Gentiles) now worship the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Whereas the Scriptures foretold that Messiah would be rejected by His own people (Isaiah 53:3, Psalm 118:22), the Gentiles would welcome Him: "And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, Who shall stand as a banner to the people; For the Gentiles shall seek Him, And His resting place shall be glorious" (Isaiah 11:10).

I told the rabbi, "This is a very strong and, I think, persuasive argument for Jesus as Israel's

Messiah, since He has clearly been received by so many from the nations as the Savior of the world." It gave that rabbi something to think about because he paused, and nodded his head silently.

As you read this newsletter, our Jews for Jesus missionaries are following up on many contacts we received as a result of our Behold Your God New York campaign in July. We hope that Christian

## *Testifying of God's great love among Gentiles is as ancient a task as it is sacred.*

friends from local churches will be doing the same with the many contacts we entrusted to them. If the past pattern continues, we will see five to ten times as much fruit through our efforts among Gentiles as we see among Jews. Is that such a bad thing? Certainly not! Yet many fail to see the significance of it.

A rabbi once debated our founder Moishe Rosen on a radio show in New York City. The rabbi leveled an interesting "charge" at Moishe: "I know that you Jews for Jesus convert five times as many Gentiles as you do Jews." Moishe replied, "What do

you want us to do, throw them back?" The Bible tells us that all the angels in heaven rejoice when one sinner repents and we are thrilled to join in the rejoicing over the salvation of Gentiles and Jews. What an honor to follow in the footsteps of the psalmist who wrote, "Therefore I will give thanks to You, O LORD, among the Gentiles, And sing praises to Your name" (Psalm 18:49).

Being a philo-Gentile is not new. Testifying of God's great love among Gentiles is as ancient a task as it is sacred. We aren't merely reciprocating the love shown us. We are entering into the holy calling and purpose of the Lord to love those whom He loves. So if you, like most of our readers, are a Gentile, and if you have thought that being a Gentile is not all that special, think again. God prizes diversity, as you can see throughout His creation. And Gentiles, as a variety of nations, make for great and wonderful diversity within the body of Christ. You, with your heritage and your unique individuality, are deeply loved by your heavenly Father through His Son Jesus Christ. His purpose in bestowing His love on us Jews was so that you might fully know His love and grace in your own life. And because we in Jews for Jesus love our Messiah as you do, we all want to be philo-Gentiles, just as He is. We love you too.

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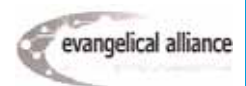
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Send cheques to "Jews for Jesus" and use the JFJ envelope please



# New York... Wow!

by Susan Perlman

For the month of July, Jews for Jesus was an unavoidable presence in the greater New York area—the final stop of the organization's "Behold Your God" evangelistic campaigns, which covered every city (54 of them) outside of Israel with a Jewish population of 25,000 or more.

This Grand Final pulled out all the stops, with over 150 staff and volunteers from around the world conducting nine simultaneous outreaches to all five boroughs of New York City, as well as Westchester, Northern New Jersey and Long Island. Another focus centered on three language groups—Russian-speaking Jews, Israelis, and Yiddish-speaking Chassidim. The Chassidic campaign included the mailing of Yiddish language DVDs of the life of Jesus to 80,000 Jewish households.

In addition, 450,000 direct mail pieces were sent to Jewish households, 1,800,000 evangelistic pamphlets (broadsides) were distributed, 6,410 enquirers [57% of them Jewish] who don't yet believe in Jesus gave their details for further ministry, and 502 people prayed to receive Jesus as their Messiah (241 [48% of them Jewish] with our teams.

For those who didn't receive a pamphlet or a mailer, there were the many billboards, banners, full-page newspaper ads and subway ads that blanketed the area. The theme, "Jesus for Jews" was picked up by 13 local and national television news programs that covered the month-long



campaign and a feature article in every major newspaper including the Jewish press.

"I was asked the question "Who is your PR agent?" by several people who were amazed at how the subject of Jews believing in Jesus was being discussed everywhere," said David Brickner, executive director of Jews for Jesus US. "In response, I would smile and point upward. We really saw the Lord's hand in all of this. Over 700 area churches and individuals were praying for us daily; thousands of others around the world were getting regular prayer requests and updates. We have been able to partner with local congregations on the follow-up and in all this, I believe, God is greatly honored."

The evangelistic campaign did not escape the disapproval of the leaders of the major Jewish groups in the city, who called the missionary group, "deceptive." But a Jews for Jesus staffer commented, "If they knew what we knew about Jesus, they would be joining us in the proclamation of the gospel, not opposing it."

The Australian staff of Jews for Jesus participated the entire month, including Bob Mendelsohn, national director, and Mark and Rahel Landrum.

Pictured is Sergio Danon, Brazilian director of JFJ. A full report in newspaper style will be mailed to you, Lord willing, in the next month or so. Watch for it!



## Prayer Prompters

### Please pray for:



Follow-up from July's Behold Your God Grand Final in New York!



Leonid, Olga, Mira and Elvira who left Russia and Ukraine to help in New York and are still there for a good three months, and who knows how much longer after that.



Our national director, Bob Mendelsohn and his family seeking permanent residency in Australia.



Our Rosh Hashanah service (22 Sept) in Waverly (NSW) and Bob's trip to Tasmania (24-28 Sept) for unsaved Jews to attend and to hear God's word clearly.



Bob's trip to Melbourne and Ballarat (VIC) Oct 1-3 for successful deputation and evangelism opportunities.



Plans for our Outreaches in Sydney and Melbourne to continue and for the development of our office in Singapore to be finalized.



Jewish people throughout our region to be desperate for the reality of God, especially Israelis in this time of trouble.

