A VISION FOR THE
NEXT GENERATION

A BRIGHT FUTURE FOR ISRAEL | THREE AREAS OF MINISTRY FOCUS | HEBREWS BIBLE STUDY
Dear friends,

Shalom in His grace and Happy Thanksgiving. I am sure you are grateful for all the Lord has done in your life and in the life of your friends and family.

Years ago, I did my master’s thesis in seminary on Psalm 119. I examined the supposed synonyms for the Hebrew word Torah (Law) in this lengthy psalm of 176 verses! I concluded that the various terms that seemed to be interchangeable with Law—commandments, testimonies, judgments, etc.—were actually different parts of the corpus of the Law and not merely synonyms. It was a fascinating study and I learned to love the Word of God even more than before! But one of the added benefits of the project was that I regularly had to pass through Psalm 118 to get there!

Psalm 118, which invites us to thank God for His lovingkindness and mercy, and for His person, is quite different from Psalm 119, which teaches us to appreciate God’s Word. The two psalms are fairly close in theme and are great portions of Scripture to read and reflect upon during the Thanksgiving Day meal. Of course, if you read all of Psalm 119, your turkey might get cold!

David writes regarding the Law, the true love of his life:

O how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day (119:97).

How sweet are Your words to my taste! Yes, sweeter than honey to my mouth (119:103).

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path (119:105).

Therefore I love Your commandments above gold, yes, above fine gold (119:127).

These are beautiful words and an invitation from the King to feast on Scripture and not just on mom’s delicious sweet potato casserole! I find myself grateful for His provision of the Bible as I am able to better understand the will and mind of God and be guided by His Word to live according to His holy plans and purposes.

I am thankful for the Word of God and the beauty of His person.

His nature is also revealed in Scripture and by His Spirit in my everyday experience. As the psalmist penned, “Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; for His lovingkindness is everlasting” (Psalm 118:1).

I rejoice this Thanksgiving because of Him. He is good and He is gracious! The Hebrew term chesed, translated lovingkindness, should be understood as “covenant loyalty.” I am grateful He is a loyal God who cares for His children. And further, His grace and loyalty to me and to the Jewish people extends throughout eternity.

125 Years of Service for the Lord on Behalf of the Jewish People

Your Mission to the Jewish People has experienced 125 years of this loyalty and love! In fact, we only have one more month to go in our celebration of 125 years of ministry to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. It has been a wonderful year of joyful celebration. On November 15, we concluded our year of gratitude with a gala in Brooklyn, where we were born as a ministry. We heard from Jay Sekulow and praised the Lord in music with members of the Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir. We were blessed by Janet Parshall of Moody Radio, America’s most beloved radio host. We heard testimonies from Chosen People Ministries staff workers in Israel and Brooklyn and from friends of our ministry who were able to testify to God’s transforming power in their lives through the work of this 125-year-old ministry among the Jewish people.

Very Humble Origins

As you know, we were founded by Rabbi Leopold Cohn who came to the United States from his native Hungary in the late 19th century. Not long after he arrived, he heard a Polish Presbyterian missionary and preacher on the lower side of Manhattan proclaiming the gospel inside a Dutch Reformed Church. Once the Lord gripped the heart of the rabbi, he committed himself to the lifelong effort of reaching his fellow Jewish people with the gospel, and before his death, baptized almost 1,000 Jewish people!

I am the seventh president of the Mission and grateful to be called by God to this incredible position. I know the value of Chosen People Ministries because it was this mission that discipled me, paid my way through Bible college,
and gave me opportunities to serve the Lord. Chosen People Ministries also helped me gain the skills to help others who want to tell their Jewish friends about Jesus.

My wife came to faith in Los Angeles through the work of a Chosen People Ministries missionary who trained a group of Korean Christian teens at a very Jewish high school to share the gospel with the Jewish people and, praise God, they shared the good news with my wife.

I have been president of Chosen People Ministries for twenty-two years, and am as excited as ever about the growth and potential of our ministry. Of course, you have heard the aphorism, "Today is the first day of the rest of your life!" Funny thing about this…it is true. Walking with Jesus is never static; it is always dynamic. Our world is changing, the Jewish community is changing, and Chosen People Ministries is changing, too.

We are not changing or adapting the eternal message of the gospel, although our culture pressures us to do so each day. We remain more committed to the essentials of the gospel than ever! But our strategies, methods, and tactics are changing in order to reach a new generation of Jewish people with the gospel.

More than ever, we need your prayers, help, support, and love. Without you, we simply could not do the ministry to which God has called us. Your Mission to the Jewish People is now in more than twenty-five cities in North America and in nineteen countries around the world serving the Lord among the Jewish people.

And as we step into 2020—our 126th year of ministry—we are ready, available to God, and thankful for the opportunity to serve our Lord, Jesus the Messiah.

Three Major Focuses in 2020 and Beyond

After a long season of prayer, planning, and discussions with our staff, board, and friends, we have decided to embrace three major areas of ministry starting in 2020 and beyond.

Israel

First of all, we are going to do all we can to reach Israel with the gospel. There are more than six and a half million Jewish people in Israel, and more are moving there all the time. Israelis are now more open to Jesus than ever before. I believe that it is the time to strike while the iron is hot—we are increasing our staff and establishing congregations and centers all across the country. We need your help and support to make these plans a reality. We now have ministries in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and in the northern part of the country among young adults, children, Holocaust survivors, and more! We have more than twenty staff members serving the Lord in the Holy Land.

Digital and Social Media

We are using the power of digital and social media for His glory. We want to focus on evangelism, discipleship, and building community online for those who come to faith. We are having good success through our Facebook campaigns that engage people with Isaiah 53 and a new discipleship series entitled

Follow Messiah. Soon, we will roll out other websites like Chosen People Answers, an almost encyclopedic apologetics website for Jewish people that I believe will revolutionize Jewish evangelism.

The Joshua Initiative

We are also investing in the next generation of Messianic Jews and leaders in the field of Jewish missions. This is why we started the Feinberg Seminary program in Brooklyn almost fifteen years ago, which has graduated thirty students, most of whom are serving the Lord in Jewish ministry. We are discipling new Jewish believers and helping them become part of our congregations and centers. We will also intensify our efforts on college campuses and emphasize children’s ministries through camping and providing educational resources. What a joy it is for us to train young people for the Lord.

The Future Is Bright for Israel and the Jewish People

Can I count on you to stand with us in prayer and financially as we embrace the future?

At the gala earlier this month, we rolled out the To the Jew First Campaign based upon Paul’s statement in Romans 1:16, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek”.

Here is a summary of what we challenged God’s people to consider.

We are asking God’s people to support us as we focus on the three areas we mentioned. The total campaign will be about $3.2 million per year. We will tell you our plans in the months ahead so that you can better understand why we need this amount.

At the Gala, we asked our friends to consider making a donation of $1,000 or more so that we can enter the new year with $1 million towards the annual goal. These funds will immediately help us pay the rent in Tel Aviv, supplement our under-supported missionaries’ salaries throughout Israel and other difficult places, invest in social media advertising, and help support our seminary training program, camps, and young adult programs so that we can build a future for the Messianic movement until that great day when we will all be out of work!

According to the Apostle Paul in Romans 11:25–29, a day is coming when all Israel will be saved. But until then, please join me in praying, supporting, and helping us reach God’s beloved chosen people with the unchanging message of salvation through the death and resurrection of Jesus the Messiah.

On behalf of our staff, I cannot thank you enough for your faithfulness in response to His faithfulness.

Thankful to the Lord and for you.

Mitch

“Brethren, my heart’s desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation” (Romans 10:1).
At the heart of Chosen People Ministries is the declaration by the Jewish apostle Paul, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek” (Romans 1:16). This principle has led to the establishment of our ministry centers and congregations across the globe—anywhere there is a high concentration of Jewish people. Of course, there is no place in the world with more Jewish people than Israel. This is why outreach in the Holy Land is such an important focus.

Although our work in Israel began much earlier, the establishment of the Messianic Center in Jerusalem in 2005 was a turning point in reaching Israelis. It serves as the main hub for our work throughout the country. We have since added a second center in the Tel Aviv suburb of Ramat Gan, and the ministry continues to expand! These centers serve as places of worship, classrooms, short-term mission accommodations, public lecture halls, gospel cafés, and so much more. It should come as no surprise that we will always keep our eyes open for other opportunities to establish Messianic centers in Israel.

We also have teams in the north of Israel and along the Mediterranean coast. One of our favorite and most fruitful ministries is working with Holocaust survivors, and we praise God that some of these very elderly Israelis have come to know the Messiah!

But Israel is not the only place to reach Israelis with the gospel. After graduating high school, Israeli young adults serve a mandatory two to three years in the Israel Defense Forces. Following their military service, they often travel for several months or longer. Some of the common sites these wandering Israelis visit include New Zealand, India, Australia, and Brazil. This period of soul-searching provides a wonderful opportunity for us to engage these Jewish travelers in conversations about the Messiah.

Chosen People Ministries has taken advantage of this tremendous evangelistic opportunity by establishing ministry outposts in the common locations where these young Israelis like to travel. Our branch in New Zealand operates the Zula Lodge, which hosts almost 2,000 Israelis each year! Dinners are peppered with gospel conversations, and late-night chats about spiritual matters often go well into the morning. And very recently, we have partnered with a young couple who have established a guest house ministry in India where they serve Israelis looking to experience Indian culture and, of course, the beaches!

We plan to begin a similar ministry in Brazil, and we continue to send short-term teams to Nepal and other hot spots where post-army Israelis are searching for truth.

All of our sites provide care and companionship to Israelis far from home. Our work comes from a deep love for Jewish people and a desire to see them come to know the Jewish Messiah, Jesus.

Imagine what might have happened if the Internet had been available during the first century—how many people would have been instantly told the good news of Jesus the Messiah? Now that the tools are available, Chosen People Ministries is making the most of this invaluable gospel resource. In the last five years, our digital evangelism has taken off. We are reaching countless Jewish people through online streams, including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and the I Found Shalom video testimony series, which now numbers more than one hundred testimonies!

More recently, we have developed Follow Messiah, a video discipleship series based on the Sermon on the Mount. It is the first video discipleship series created specifically for Jewish seekers and new Jewish believers in Messiah.

Successful digital evangelism is the joint effort of many talented individuals. For example, our Facebook campaign allows Jewish seekers to request a free copy of Isaiah 53 Explained. This requires an ad to be created, the Facebook post to be placed and scheduled, and the process to fulfill requests for the book. Chosen People Ministries has graphic designers, social media specialists, and others who are responsible for marketing our events and outreaches. Aesthetics, design, and branding are key to a successful online outreach.

Our presence on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter allows our digital missionaries to be interactive and connect personally with seekers. We also respond to most comments, positive and negative, as well as post daily and weekly content to interest Jewish people in Jesus.

The creation of new video content is imperative, and
leadership succession may simply refer to one individual replacing another. But Scripture also tells the story of one generation replacing another. God called Joshua to lead a new generation of His chosen people and told him that He would be with him just as He was with Moses! As the Lord promised,

No man will be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you. Be strong and courageous, for you shall give this people possession of the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. (Joshua 1:5–6)

A similar time is coming for Your Mission to the Jewish People, as an older generation of missionaries must now prepare a new generation for Jewish missions in the twenty-first century! This is why we are intentionally investing in our next generation of staff preparing to one day lead our 125-year-old outreach to the Jewish people.

We are also directing our evangelistic efforts toward a new generation as we focus more energy, programs, and personnel on reaching Jewish young adults online, on campus, and in person, both in the United States and in Israel.

We call this effort The Joshua Initiative.

We are now beginning to see a movement of the Holy Spirit among young Israelis in the Holy Land. Hundreds of Israeli young people, mostly raised in Messianic Jewish homes, are now ready to stand for the Lord within Israel. They were born and raised in Israel, speak perfect Hebrew, have served in the army, and are dedicated to the Messiah. A half dozen of these young people are now serving with Chosen People Ministries in Israel and are reaching their generation, along with children and youth, for the Lord. They are the new Joshua generation!

Our outreach and discipleship programs for children and teens, ages 8–16, is growing. Many of these kids come from mixed Messiah-believing and non-believing homes. Sleepaway camps allow us to minister to the next generation through worship, devotion, and teaching, and, of course, through all the traditional fun camp activities! Each summer, we have more than a hundred kids in camps on the East and West Coast and more than 500 each year in Israel! Many have come to faith in the Messiah Jesus.

We have also developed special teen mission trips to New York City and Israel so teens can step out of their comfort zone and share the gospel through our outreaches.

For the past decade, we have sponsored and funded a global conference for Messianic believers, ages 18–35. Muchan, which means “ready” in Hebrew, meets in a European city that has a meaningful Jewish heritage. The conference is filled with teaching, fellowship, worship, and encouragement.

We are also pioneering a new gap-year program for college-aged young people. Four young men are now living in Manhattan’s West Village and are tasked with reaching out to the Jewish student body at New York University, which has more Jewish students than the famous Yeshiva University in New York City—a school that trains rabbis and Jewish community workers! Our local staff provide training, mentoring, and guidance for them as they share the gospel with Jewish students. This is an excellent way to disciple new workers for the harvest and to reach university students. We hope to expand this ministry in the days ahead as there are now more than 200,000 Jewish students on campuses in the United States and Canada.

Your Mission to the Jewish People also offers a fully accredited Master of Divinity degree in Messianic Jewish Studies in partnership with Biola University’s Talbot School of Theology. We are training the next generation of men and women called to full-time Jewish ministry. We currently have twenty-five graduates serving in Jewish ministry around the world! We also provide the space and the professors, reducing costs dramatically so that our graduates do not incur debt and are able to go directly into ministry without having to pay off student loans.

The Joshua Initiative will ensure that the work of bringing the gospel to the Jewish people will continue long into the future.
Hebrews 12:18-24
A CONTRAST OF TWO MOUNTAINS

Our last Bible study of Hebrews 12:12–17 focused on the obligations of a mature believer in Messiah. Now, beginning in verse 18, the writer goes back to the familiar topic in Hebrews of the superiority of the New Covenant over the Old Covenant. He uses the metaphor of two mountains, Sinai and Zion, to point out the difference in relationship to God under the Old and New Covenants. Why would he need to do that? Because of the persecution these Jewish believers were experiencing, they were being tempted to return to trusting in the Torah. By directing their thoughts back to the giving of the Law, the writer reminds his readers that they did not experience quietness, rest, and peace at Sinai, but rather an overwhelming fear from “a blazing fire,” and from “darkness and gloom and whirlwind.” The event was so frightening that even Moses himself said, “I am full of fear and trembling” (Hebrews 12:21). Clearly, the point of Hebrews is making is that a believer seeking to escape persecution in this manner will not find the peace and rest he or she desires, but like Moses, would only experience an overwhelming fear.

Hebrews 12:18 begins with the negative phrase, “For you have not come to a mountain...” and describes the overwhelming fear on Mount Sinai. Now, in verse 22, it is contrasted with the phrase, “But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem....” As terrifying as the experience of Mount Sinai is, the heavenly Mount Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem—the city of the living God—is quite the contrary. It is a place that brings rest and peace to the redeemed of the Lord. Though not presently on earth, the heavenly Mount Zion will be revealed prophetically in the future.

Beginning at the end of 12:22, the writer of Hebrews describes five groups of occupants in Mount Zion. The first group of occupants is the “myriads of angels.” It is interesting to note that the same myriad of angels at Mount Zion were also at Mount Sinai, but like the God they served there, they also were inapproachable and brought fear and terror to the Israelites (Deuteronomy 33:2, Daniel 7:10, Galatians 3:19). The second group is described as “the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven.” The Church as a whole, comprised of both Jewish and non-Jewish believers in Messiah, will eventually be in the heavenly Jerusalem. However, given the context of the book of Hebrews, written especially to struggling Jewish believers dealing with persecution, the church of the firstborn is likely referring specifically to Jewish believers, as in the book of James who also refers to them as firstfruits.

The third occupant in Mount Zion is “God, the Judge of all.” God the Father, in His role as Judge, not only actively judges people to determine their eternal abode, but He will judge angels, as well—thus His title, “Judge of All.” The fourth group of occupants are “the spirits of the righteous made perfect.” These are the Old Testament faithful, who the writer of Hebrews so beautifully describes in Hebrews 11. These believers are called “spirits” because they have not yet received resurrected bodies since the resurrection of Old Testament believers has not yet taken place. The fifth occupant is “Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel.” Jesus’ Hebrew name, Yeshua, is His redemptive name. As our redeemer, Yeshua is the mediator of a new covenant. Here, the writer of Hebrews uses the Greek word neos, meaning new in point of time, instead of the usual word kainos, meaning new in quality or nature. The new covenant was recently made, because Jesus’ blood was recently shed and speaks better than the blood of Abel, as it is the only blood that can bring us into the very presence of God.
Jacob’s name to Israel. Later on, in that same chapter, where Jacob wrestled with a man and the man changed those are metaphors. Toby then shared with him Genesis 32 a meal with Abraham, to which Yosef responded by saying speak of God walking in the Garden of Eden, or God eating then brought up various passages in the Old Testament that by saying that God cannot take on the form of man. Toby too, would that still make me an idolater?” Yosef responded asked him, “If Jesus was more than a man, if He was God makes him an idolater, since Jesus is just a man. Toby look on his face and said to Toby that believing in Jesus Jewish people don’t believe in Jesus.” Toby said, “I am Jewish too and I believe in Jesus.” Yosef had a confused overview of the New Testament and who Jesus is when he was interrupted by Yosef, who said, “I am Jewish, and Yosef* had never read the New Testament and did not know much about Jesus at all. Toby started to give a brief interrupted by Yosef, who said, “I am Jewish, and Yosef* had never read the New Testament and did not know much about Jesus at all. Toby started to give a brief overview of the New Testament and who Jesus is when he was interrupted by Yosef, who said, “I am Jewish, and Jewish people don’t believe in Jesus.” Toby said, “I am Jewish too and I believe in Jesus.” Yosef had a confused look on his face and said to Toby that believing in Jesus makes him an idolater, since Jesus is just a man. Toby asked him, “If Jesus was more than a man, if He was God too, would that still make me an idolater?” Yosef responded by saying that God cannot take on the form of man. Toby then brought up various passages in the Old Testament that speak of God walking in the Garden of Eden, or God eating a meal with Abraham, to which Yosef responded by saying those are metaphors. Toby then shared with him Genesis 32 where Jacob wrestled with a man and the man changed Jacob’s name to Israel. Later on, in that same chapter, Jacob says, “I have seen God face to face, yet my life has been preserved.” Toby told Yosef, “It seems to me that this passage is more than a metaphor, and that Jacob literally wrestled with God.” Yosef responded by saying that he is going to look into this some more. They exchanged information and he even took a New Testament. He said, “If my father knew I was talking with you, I would be in a lot of trouble.” Please pray for Yosef.

**TWO MISSIONARIES AND A STEINWAY**

Recently, United Kingdom staff members, Simon and Emily, crossed paths with a young woman in a tremendous amount of emotional pain. If you had heard her, you might have thought she had mental health issues; she was like someone you might cross the street to avoid. However, Simon and Emily reached out to her and began to listen to her story—a very familiar one of a difficult childhood and poor choices. It turned out that Valerie* was Jewish and that she had lived in the area as a child. She then told them that she was a professional musician...a pianist to be exact! Simon had an idea. It just so happened they were outside of a church—a church with a Steinway. And it just so happened that Simon had the keys! So, he invited her into the church to show them how good she was, and she accepted! Imagine an impromptu performance by a virtuoso pianist at Carnegie Hall! “Valerie reminded me again not to judge by outward appearances and that we cannot always see the way that God will lead us to Jewish people who need to hear the gospel,” recalls Simon. That day, Valerie visited a church, was recognized for her talent, heard the testimonies of two Jewish believers, and gratefully received a New Testament. Please pray for Valerie and that the conversation continues!
Thanks... & Giving

“...you will be enriched in everything for all liberality, which through us is producing thanksgiving to God” (2 Corinthians 9:11).

Friend and supporter, Tommie, was introduced to Chosen People Ministries in 1973 when her mother-in-law shared one of the ministry’s magazines with her.

Currently, through her gifts from her IRA distribution, she is able to give more to Chosen People Ministries and save on taxes, too. Tommie says, “I give according to how the Lord leads me...and consider the IRA, Jesus’ IRA.”

You, too, can make a wonderful difference through your wise stewardship!

• If you are age 70½ or older, you can transfer up to $100,000 from your traditional individual retirement account (IRA) to a qualified charity without adding a penny to your taxable income.

• This 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 to Chosen People Ministries. A gift like this may also lower your adjusted gross income, and:
  • Lower your tax bracket
  • Lower your Medicare premium
  • Lower your federal taxes
  • Reduce your state taxes
  • And more!

• Most importantly, you will make a tremendous impact...helping to share the message of Messiah with Jewish people everywhere—and we are grateful! Thank you!

For more information, contact Cindy Forbes at 212-223-2252 or cforbes@chosenpeople.com.