

# YOUR PARTNERSHIP MOVES HEARTS IN **Moscow!**

**W**e asked you to pray for our Moscow campaign (August 26–September 7). **Praise God, 100 people met their Messiah during that campaign. Fifty-one of those new believers are Jewish!**

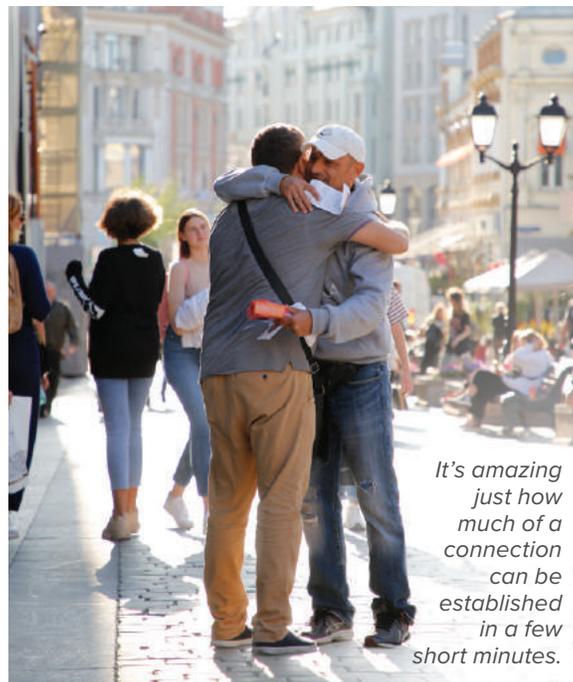
Nadya was making phone calls from our database when a woman answered, informed Nadya that the person she asked to speak to was dead, and hung up.

Nadya says, “I felt such a pain in my heart and decided to call the woman back. When she answered the phone, I told her, ‘I pray that God may touch your heart and give you shalom. He loves you.’”

The woman, Irina, wanted to continue the conversation. Nadya says, “I was telling her the gospel, and the Holy Spirit touched her. Irina prayed with me to receive Jesus into her heart!”

That conversation was one of 96 visits that our campaigners had by phone. Besides Irina, 21 more Jewish people prayed to receive Jesus during these visits.

*More on page 6!*



*It's amazing  
just how  
much of a  
connection  
can be  
established  
in a few  
short minutes.*

## Don't miss

David Brickner's thoughts on Hanukkah and nonconformists page 2

12 Ways to Help Your Church Make Jewish Visitors Comfortable page 8

# That's Dedication: Hanukkah & the Theology of Non-Conformists

BY DAVID BRICKNER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

*Hanukkah* is the Hebrew word for “dedication.” And though the eight-day Jewish holiday is also called “the Festival of Lights,” it’s about the dedication—actually rededication—of the Second Temple. That temple had been utterly desecrated by the conquering Syrians, who had erected idols and poured pig’s blood in the Holy Place.

After a successful uprising in 165 BC, the Jewish people cleansed and rededicated the temple for its holy purpose—the sacred worship of the God of Israel. That would have been impossible apart from God, of course, but He used the marvelous dedication of a small band of Jewish fighters known as the Maccabees to accomplish His victory.

## Resist like a Maccabee

The Maccabees loved and trusted God enough to withstand the seemingly overwhelming advantage of the Syrian army.

The Syrian king, Antiochus, had forced everyone under his rule to adopt Greek culture, including their religion. Dietary laws, circumcision, and every outwardly observable Jewish custom that set God’s people apart from other nations was outlawed.

Jewish people were ordered to blend in and sacrifice their spiritual convictions on the altar of Hellenism (Greek ways).

Sound familiar? **Today’s secular culture exerts a powerful pressure to conform.** Ironically, dissenting points of view from its supposed tolerance are not tolerated. Holding to biblical views on many matters, including marriage and sexuality, can result in censure by governmental, academic, and business authorities.

In many circles, freedom of religion means the freedom to believe and worship as you please—as long as it’s behind closed doors. Many consider it disrespectful and morally wrong to speak of spiritual matters publicly in hopes of persuading others. These repressive tendencies are gaining an increasing foothold, to the point of dominating academic life and most of the media.

## Accept a minority mindset

Back in the days of the Maccabees, the majority of Jewish people had taken the path of accommodation to Antiochus’s demands. Many had already been flirting with Greek philosophy and culture, drawn by the siren song of sophistication and liberation from the strict ways of the Torah. Many Jewish people had

---

JEWS FÜR JESUS. **WE RELENTLESSLY PURSUE GOD’S PLAN FOR THE SALVATION OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE.**

Jews for Jesus operates in twelve countries, with international headquarters at 60 Haight Street, San Francisco, CA 94102-5895; phone: (415) 864-2600; email: [jfj@jewsforjesus.org](mailto:jfj@jewsforjesus.org); web: [jewsforjesus.org](http://jewsforjesus.org); editor: Ruth Rosen; art director: Paige Saunders; design and illustration: Laura Pineda; Text and photos © Jews for Jesus unless otherwise indicated. ISSN 0740-5901, Volume 03:5780, December 2019.



taken on Greek names and Greek ideas and were spending time at the gymnasium, where nudity was common and sexual mores were often flouted. These accommodationists were embarrassed by the more traditional members of their community and welcomed the opportunity to give in to the demands of the dominant culture. Again, does this sound familiar?

Some Christians' efforts to be relevant seem more to me like efforts to fit in, but then I don't know their hearts. I do know that it is fruitless to reshape our worship and our witness to conform to the dominant culture. God's Word tells us, **"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind"** (from Romans 12:2).

Some followers of Jesus may have already fallen into the trap of accommodationists, adopting what sociology professor Christian Smith calls "moralistic therapeutic deism"—the view that the purpose of life is to be happy, and God exists to help us achieve that.

The Maccabees were willing to embrace the vulnerability of being a faithful minority as they submitted to the authority of God's Word. Can we admit that the days of the "moral majority" are gone, if they were ever really here?

Unlike the Maccabees, we do not take up literal swords in what some have termed "culture wars," but we do need to submit our lives to the authority of God's Word as we follow Jesus. That means sacrificing our comfort, rather than succumbing to any ideas or values that contradict the clear teaching of the Bible. It means living out our faith and values authentically, so that what we believe can be known by others through our lives and language despite potential consequences. **Standing up for truth can be costly, but it is worth it.**

John Stonestreet of the Colson Center suggests believers develop a "theology of being fired," because more and more Christians who don't keep their beliefs to themselves have been sacked. (See, for example, the story of Atlanta Fire Chief Kelvin Cochrane at <http://www.adfmedia.org/News/PRDetail/9520>).

## Protect your identity and purpose

Finally, the Maccabees recognized and responded to the importance of their identity as Jews. If Antiochus had had his way, the Jewish people would have assimilated and ceased to exist as the unique people God made them to be, with the unique purpose of bringing the Messiah to the world.

In the same way, we who follow the Lord Jesus need to recognize and respond to the supreme value of our identity in Messiah (Christ). If we assimilate and lose our unique identity, we cannot fulfill our purpose—to help others know and love Him, too.

That is why dedication is the second of three core values in Jews for Jesus; the first is passion for the lost, and the third is teamwork. They all work together. We want to embody God's passion for the lost, but that is only sustainable with dedication and teamwork. I hope you know that partners like you are valued team members. I believe our mutual dedication has brought us together.

Jesus' dedication to obey the Father brought Him down from heaven to be crucified and win our salvation. The Father's dedication to His beloved Son raised Him from the dead. With Jesus now seated at the right hand of the Majesty on High, we can dedicate (and rededicate) ourselves to worshiping and serving Him. Thank you for *your* dedication to God's work. Empowered by His Holy Spirit, together we can do amazing things for His Kingdom.

## Hanukkah Facts

- This year Hanukkah begins at sundown on December 22.
- The most common symbol of the festival is the *hanukkiyah*, a nine-branch menorah (candelabra) that is lit progressively (one candle the first night, two the second, etc.) for each of the eight nights of the festival. The ninth candle is the *shamash* or "servant" which is lit first and used to light the other candles.
- The historical events celebrated at Hanukkah are not recorded in the Bible because they occurred in the intertestamental period. (They are recorded in the books of 1st and 2nd Maccabees.)
- The festival is mentioned one time in the New Testament. "Now it was the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem, and it was winter" (John 10:22). That same chapter includes Jesus' pivotal declaration: "I and My Father are one" (John 10:30).

# MINISTRY

M ✨ M E N T S



## An Orthodox mom and her daughters come to faith

**Shoshannah Weinisch** has an amazing story to share from

**New York:** “Yocheved was born in Israel, but her family moved to Queens, New York when she was six. Yocheved’s

family was Orthodox, and while she grew up in a religious home, she always felt that something was missing. Life got busy, and Yocheved set aside those feelings . . . until a few years ago when she began a purposeful search for spiritual meaning.

“She explored all kinds of videos on the internet, and one day she landed on Sid Roth’s ‘It’s Supernatural’ channel. Yocheved began to watch everything she could find about being Jewish and believing in Yeshua (Jesus). She got a Bible (Old and New Testament) and began to read and pray. Before long, she began to think that Yeshua must be the Jewish Messiah.

“Eventually, Yocheved found the Jews for Jesus website and reached out to our New York branch. I got the call. From our first visit, Yocheved told me she was ‘in love’ with Jesus. My hope in meeting with her was that she would come to understand what she believed and why, and what salvation meant. I wanted her to be able to explain her belief in Yeshua, especially to her two daughters.

“When I presented Yocheved with the gospel, she quickly admitted she was a sinner and was heartbroken that Jesus had to bear her sin. She responded in faith and prayed to receive His forgiveness.

“For almost a year, Yocheved and I met occasionally during her lunch hour, sorting out rabbinic traditions from biblical truth. I learned that her two daughters, Devorah, 11, and Miriam, 14, attended Jewish religious school, and that Yocheved had been sharing her spiritual journey with them. In fact, when a classmate said that Jesus was the reason for the Holocaust, Miriam told her, ‘Yeshua is nice, and He’s Jewish!’ I suggested the girls might like to attend our Camp Gilgal, but they were not especially interested.

“I wanted the family to meet Rebekah and Sam Rood, who lead our East Coast Children and Youth

Ministry (CYM). When the CYM team hosted a barbecue, Yocheved came with her daughters. It was a great night. From our interactions there, I believed Miriam and Devorah were ready to receive Yeshua as their Redeemer.

“I invited Yocheved and her daughters to make jewelry at our apartment on a Saturday afternoon and asked if I could have a Bible study with the girls afterward. That day, both girls (individually) received Yeshua as their Messiah. I decided to bring up the subject of Camp Gilgal again, and Miriam said, ‘If they’re going to talk about Yeshua and the Bible, I want to go.’

“Both girls attended camp, where they reconnected with former neighbors. Yocheved rekindled her friendship with their mom, Annette, and asked, ‘Why didn’t you tell me about Yeshua?’ Annette reminded Yocheved of the times when she had shared her faith in Yeshua, but Yocheved was not yet able to hear. Now the two speak and pray together almost daily!

“Yocheved and her daughters decided to be baptized together, as you see below. Shoshannah’s husband, Stewart performed the baptism. The rest of the faces are blurred to protect privacy. Please keep this family in your prayers.”





## LiveChat leads to another salvation story

**Lynn McCoy** from **Washington, DC** reports, “Carly told me how dissatisfied she’d been with her

nominally Christian upbringing. In fact, she was put off by anti-Semitic remarks

that she heard from supposed Christians. So she decided to visit a synagogue, where she immediately felt at home. She converted to Reform Judaism six years ago, and her husband followed soon after.

“However, before Carly converted, she had a supernatural experience. She told God that she wanted to have a conversation with Jesus—and found herself unexpectedly surrounded by light. For a moment, she thought she was dying. The experience was warm, peaceful, and while there were no words, she felt that Jesus had communicated with her in a very real way. She is in the medical profession and has a scientific background, but she could never explain or forget that experience, though it did not prevent her from leaving the church.

“Carly became steeped in her new religion. Even though she had joined a Reform synagogue where much of the service was in English, she learned Hebrew. But though she loved the culture and the community, six years later, she began to wonder. She found that certain Jewish prayers that talk about Messianic promises seemed to be pointing to Jesus. She felt conflicted, but as the summer of 2018 was drawing to a close, she began exploring the possibility of being Jewish and believing in Jesus. She found our website and left her contact information via LiveChat.

“I received her info and contacted her the same day. We talked for about two hours as she shared her story. We began meeting by Skype to study the Scriptures. Carly realized that her modern Jewish translation was not in sync with older, Orthodox versions. In fact, the Scripture we know as Isaiah 9:6 was not even in her Bible.

“By the third week, we were looking at Isaiah 52–53, and Carly noticed that in addition to more translation inconsistencies, this portion of Scripture is nowhere in the *parsha* (weekly Scripture readings). When she mentioned this in a study group at her synagogue, she ‘got a lot of weird looks.’ Carly realized she was beginning to see certain things very differently from the rest of her community. Isaiah seemed to be pointing so clearly to Jesus.

“On our fourth visit, just after Rosh Hashanah, we talked about the Jewish tradition concerning the Book of Life. I explained that the book of Revelation talks about the Lamb’s Book of Life, and how those written in that book have peace and a place with God forever.

“Carly asked me, ‘What do I do now?’ We do not believe in pressuring people, so I said, ‘What do you want to do?’ Carly told me that she wanted this new life with Jesus, and so we prayed together.”

## Jews for Jesus helps lead synagogue services

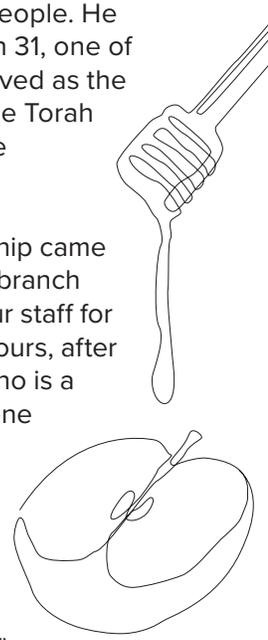
We asked you to pray for us over the High Holidays (Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur), as we hoped to connect with people at our branch events. In a most amazing answer to prayer, one of our branches (location undisclosed to protect the privacy of the synagogue) was invited to participate officially in traditional (non-Messianic) synagogue services.

On Erev Rosh Hashanah (the evening that begins the holiday), around 60 people gathered at the synagogue to usher in the new year. Our team was responsible for coordinating with the police. (Due to rising anti-Semitism, these services were considered a high risk for targeting Jewish people.) We were also checking people in, making sure everyone was registered or had paid,\* as well as ushering people to their seats. Finally, we set up the traditional refreshments for people to enjoy after the service.

Our team was even more involved in the service on the following day. Our branch leader helped preside over the service, attended by some 30 people. He read from the *Haftarah* portion (Jeremiah 31, one of the great Messianic prophecies!) and served as the *shomer*. (The *shomer* stands by during the Torah readings, correcting any mistakes people might make as they read the Hebrew.)

After the service, the synagogue leadership came to a reception hosted in the home of our branch leader and his wife. They mingled with our staff for traditional refreshments for a couple of hours, after which one of the synagogue members who is a professional opera singer regaled everyone with an aria.

The following day, the *Chazzan* (synagogue cantor) wrote to our branch leader: “Thanks to you our Rosh Hashanah services were a wonder of organization! (*continue on p. 7*)



## More from Moscow *(continued from page 1)*

When God puts campaigners in just the right place at just the right time, we know God is answering your prayers and ours.

Emmanuel, a young Jewish man from Turkey, approached Paula, one of our volunteers from the US. He explained that his mother had become a believer in Jesus so he was interested. As Paula shared the gospel with Emmanuel, he was clearly familiar with the message. Paula says, “So I asked if he’d like to ask Yeshua for forgiveness of his sins—and he did.”

It’s amazing how much happened in less than two weeks, but below you can see a small glimpse of the power of prayer and partnerships at work!

**1,012** people gave us their contact information to hear more about Jesus

**170,930** pieces of gospel literature were distributed

**90** people attended our final concert and, that night,

**16** people, **7** of whom are Jewish, prayed to receive Jesus

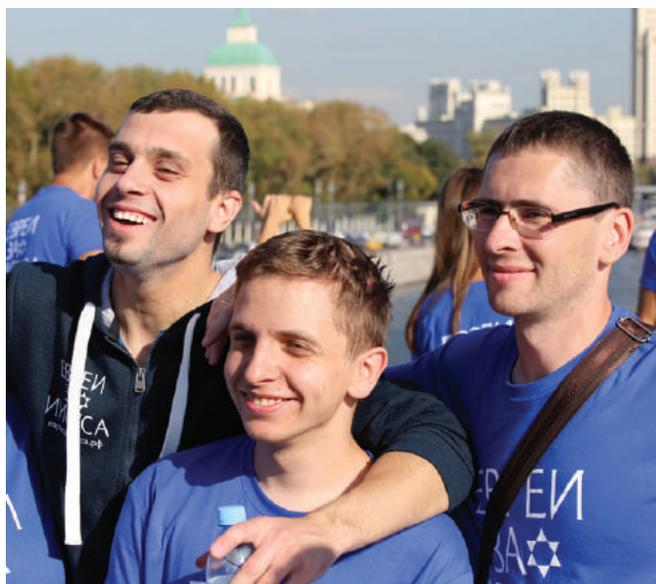
**45** people attended the final campaign event, a Shabbat meeting

**21** of whom were Jewish. Half of the people were first timers. Also, two Gentiles who came prayed to receive Yeshua!



Just about every month, we ask you to pray for God to raise up the next generation of Jews for Jesus.

Below you see the fruit of those prayers. Pavel Gorelik (in the black hoodie) co-led the campaign once again with our veteran missionary Ilya Khaimovich. To the right of Pavel is Misha, one of our newest missionaries serving “somewhere in Belarus.”



Everything went perfectly. You sang the Haftarah wonderfully, I really enjoyed it. . . . I can't wait to hear the book of Jonah!"

Another leader from the synagogue wrote, "A huge THANK YOU from my husband and I and especially for the beautiful Kiddush-Reception [refreshment time] after the service yesterday! So, the new year has taught us how to share/be together, in the beauty of *kavanah* [a mindset of sincerity, especially important for Jewish prayers and rituals], a guiding light for the 12 months to come. We hope that we get a chance to invite you to our table during this season!"

On Yom Kippur, our team participated in the services throughout the day. In fact, our branch leader led much of the morning service: he chanted the entire Torah portion, as well the book of Jonah. He also led an hour-long traditional prayer for the confession of sins.

At the end of the day, as the Chazzan thanked various people, he said, "Lastly, I would be remiss if I didn't thank [our branch leader] and his team, without which none of this would have been possible. They were the heart and soul of these services." Everyone knew that the chazzan was referring to the leader and team of Jews for Jesus.

This was an utterly unprecedented time of ministry! We praise God for His power and grace, working through the prayers of partners like you, as well as the dedication of a team leader who really gave his all for the Lord, for the gospel, and for the people in the Jewish community that he serves.

\*Synagogues do not take offerings; they maintain themselves financially through membership dues and tickets for the High Holidays.

*Names are changed to protect privacy.*

---

## Praise update and Prayer request

In March we asked you to pray for a friend of Tuvia Zaretsky's whom he led to faith back in the '70s. Tuvia wrote: "Short of a miracle or a medical breakthrough, Brian will likely join the saints in glory before the end of 2019."

Well, 2019 is nearly over, and Brian's blood count is much improved after a donation of stem cells from his son. As of this writing, his son is about to make another donation in hopes that it will boost Brian's ability to continue making more of his own blood cells. Please pray for Brian's son, as the procedure is not easy on him, and continue praying for Brian and his wife.

---

**Receive our monthly news electronically, along with bonus stories, prayer requests & Bible resources!**

Write to [jfj@jewsforjesus.org](mailto:jfj@jewsforjesus.org) and ask to hear from Jews for Jesus via email, or go to [jewsforjesus.org/subscribe](https://jewsforjesus.org/subscribe) and make sure to give your email address.



# Prayer Prompts

Please join us in praying for

- grace and strength for the 100 new believers in Moscow, and for the 51 who are Jewish (including Irina and Emmanuel) to be open to discipleship from our staff
- fruitful follow-up for more than 1,000 people who gave our Moscow team their contact information during the recent campaign
- God's grace to enable all who follow Jesus not to be conformed to the world, but to be transformed by the renewing of our minds
- continued growth for Yocheved and her daughters, Miriam and Devorah, and also that the girls' father (now divorced from Yocheved) will come to faith in Jesus
- Carly to continue to grow in her faith, and that her husband will soon know Jesus as well
- fruitful holiday outreaches, as both Hanukkah and Christmas provide special opportunities to share the gospel
- our finances (we don't use our newsletter to talk about those needs, but we hope you'll pay special attention to any additional letters or emails you receive from us, particularly this month)

# 12 Ways to Help Your Church Make Jewish Visitors Comfortable

One great thing about heaven is, no one will ever feel awkward or out of place there. People from every culture will be perfectly united in love for God and one another! But here on earth, people frequently have to venture beyond their cultural comfort zones to do something that may seem very normal to you—visit or attend church.

You can adapt the following suggestions to make people from any number of cultures more comfortable in your congregation.

## In one-to-one conversations or small group settings:

- Remember that being Jewish does not make a person fluent in Hebrew or an expert on the Bible or Judaism.
- Show an interest in visitors with “get-to-know-you” conversations about where they’re from, what kind of work they do, etc., but don’t focus on asking “Jewish” questions. The same goes for introductions. When you say, “I’d like to introduce you to Ben and Judy Friedman,” there is no need to add, “They’re Jewish.”
- If the conversation lends itself, thank the visitors for coming to the church and ask what brought them to the service.
- Most of us (Jews for Jesus staff) have been to one or more churches where someone thought we might enjoy a “Jewish joke.” This probably isn’t you, but please let anyone who is given to such jokes know that they will have the opposite effect on any Jewish visitor.
- If a Jewish believer in Jesus chooses to wear traditional garments (such as a *yarmulke*) or mentions celebrating Jewish festivals, realize this does not mean that they are “under the Law.”

## From the pulpit:

- It’s nice if the person who does announcements acknowledges that all visitors are most welcome and are invited to “join in on any songs, prayers, or practices only as you feel comfortable.”
- Alternating the English word “Christ” with the Hebrew word “Messiah” and occasionally using Jesus’ Hebrew name “Yeshua” can help people feel they are in a Jewish-friendly place.
- Likewise, when communion is served, mentioning that Jesus spoke these words as He celebrated Passover will be meaningful to Jewish visitors.
- Avoid talking about “the Jews” unless the term appears in a Scripture you are reading, in which case, please explain the context: this is a Jewish person writing about a particular group of Jewish people in Judea.
- When speaking of Israel or Jerusalem, please avoid political commentary, but likewise remember that these are not merely ancient or symbolic lands; they are real, modern places, and Jewish people attending your service may even have friends or relatives who live there.

## If there’s a meal after the service:

- Many visitors will not feel comfortable joining you unless someone specifically invites them and actually sits and visits with them during the meal.
- Jewish people, like any others, may have food restrictions—either for religious or health reasons. If you organize your potluck tables so guests can easily tell what dishes contain nuts, dairy products, or wheat, it would be thoughtful to add “pork” and “shellfish” to the list.



## For your convenience

The enclosed envelope is not a request, but a convenience for those who want to give. For those who want to give online, this URL makes it easy and secure: [j4j.co/nl1912](https://www.j4j.co/nl1912)

