



## **Israel Celebrates 60 Years of Independence —The Gospel is Preached**

*"A farmer went out to sow...some fell on rocky soil...some fell on good ground..." (Matthew 13:3–8)*

*Israel is a very challenging harvest field; it is very rocky soil. It is not an easy task to evangelize the nation of Israel. Still, the Apostle Paul encourages us to take the Gospel message to the Jews first.*

The first phase of the unprecedented mega-city evangelism campaigns in Israel took place in April. An advertisement in the daily Russian newspapers offered a DVD, about the sacrificial death of the

Messiah during the Passover in Jerusalem 2000 years ago for the sins of all Jews and gentiles alike.

Although the first phase was directed toward Russian speaking Jews, its impact

was much greater than what Messianic Congregations were expecting. The sheer number of calls speaks of the desire for spiritual truth in the nation of Israel.

### **Calls From All Over Israel**

Over 1,300 calls came in and 2,000 orders were processed at the mission call center in downtown Jerusalem for the DVD movie, "ATONEMENT". The calls came in from nearly every city in Israel: Jerusalem, Jaffa, Tel Aviv, Beersheba,



*One of the campaign ads in the Hebrew language on one of 180 city buses. Calls received at the call center have surpassed all expectations. Jews want to know more about the Messiah.*

## Thousands Of Calls From All Over Israel

Haifa, Nazareth, Tiberias, Lodi, Netanja, Ashkelon, Eilat, Sdero, Beit She'an, Afula and Ashdod.

The local believers expected to receive only 6 to 10 calls during the entire month-long newspaper ad campaign; but in the first week of April, we logged calls over a hundred times that number!

The DVDs that were ordered over the phone are delivered in person. Congregations throughout Israel, from Eilat to Tiberias, are involved with the distribution of the DVDs. The first phase of the campaign has been extremely fruitful.

The DVDs have also been distributed in Haifa; "We distributed 3000 brochures for DVDs in a single day in the city of Haifa. Many of the recipients are in contact with our members now. We support this campaign 100 per cent; this is a wonderful outreach," says Carmel Assembly –Senior Pastor, David Davis.

### Jerusalem

In May, the campaign shifted to the Hebrew language. This campaign covered the two cities of Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. An estimated 2 to 3 million people have been reached with the gospel message.

Ads on the sides and back of 180 buses in Jerusalem made their way throughout the city each day. As well, 8 second ads were seen on jumbo video monitors 100,000 times during the month. Ads were also heard on the radio and seen in the daily newspapers.

The ads, liberally translated said: "If you want to know what will happen in the future; the Book of Daniel will explain it. Call this number...., you will receive a free book..."

The book, based on the message of the Prophet Daniel, was written by the Messianic Jerusalem Assembly Senior Pastor, Meno Kalisher.

Mid-way through the second phase

of the campaign, over 600 orders for the book, as well as numerous other calls were recorded in Jerusalem alone. Considering the stiff opposition of the Ultra-Orthodox Jews, every single call received is a small miracle. Before the campaign began, it was thought by some that absolutely no calls would come in.

### Tel Aviv

Our coordinator in Tel Aviv, Dan Sered from Jews for Jesus rejoiced: "This is unbelievable. A dream come true!"

The ads on the buses of Tel Aviv had the flag of Israel without the Star of David. In its place were three words: "Jeshua = Jesus = Salvation". To Jews, these words grouped together mean that Jesus the Son of God is the Messiah; which means "Salvation" (Matthew 1:21).

Hebrew speaking Jews are the rocky ground. Orthodox Jews have been making



*A young Jew ties a tefil (prayer band) and torah box to his right arm. These are traditional and important in the prayer life of Jews.*



*About 2000 orders for the DVD were processed by the call center in April. In the photo our Jerusalem office manager with Hannu Haukka.*

crank calls to our call center in great numbers. Despite the disruptions, our friends in Tel Aviv say that this has been a real breakthrough outreach. For the first time, the media in Israel is proclaiming a clear message that says Jesus is the Messiah.

“To combine the words Jeshua and Jesus in Israeli media is unbelievable,” says Dan, an Orthodox Jew who came to faith in Jesus.

Up until now, all media has been out of reach from Messianic Jews.

“That is why I was so blessed when 60 calls were logged on the first day of the Hebrew language campaign.”

About 130 Jews have expressed their desire to hear more about the Messiah during the first half of the Tel Aviv campaign.

The campaign has now hit the spot light of the Israeli press.

“This campaign is on the radar of the press in Israel; now they are talking about the name of Jesus in the national media,” says veteran missionary, Olavi Syväntö from Beersheba.

## Bible Burning Makes World Headlines

The news media in Israel has brought to the forefront an awareness of who Jesus is like never before. It started with coverage of the bomb that injured the son of a Messianic pastor near the beginning of the evangelism campaign. Then there was a story of a Messianic teen who was a

finalist in a national bible quiz in Israel who was banned from the competition because of her faith in Jesus. And most significantly, Ultra-Orthodox extremists rounded up New Testaments that had been distributed in an Ethiopian immigrant neighbourhood and burned them in the parking lot of a synagogue.

For most Jewish people, this would be considered a barbaric act to burn books; an act that was perpetrated upon them by the Nazis in 1938. Although missionary activity may raise mixed emotions in the Holy Land, these crude actions do not represent mainstream Israeli sentiment and in fact backfired on the extremists. It was the talk of the news media who expressed outrage that such actions could occur in a free and democratic society.

Now the nation of Israel is abuzz with the talk of Jesus and many Jews have even said that since these Ultra-Orthodox saw fit to burn these books, they would like to receive a New Testament and read it for themselves to see what all the controversy is about.

This story also received international attention in much of the major western media. Stories of opposition will always attract curiosity, resulting in a greater number of people checking out what the mission campaign has to say; thus being exposed to the Gospel. We have seen it time and time again in Mega-city campaigns in Russia.

## Yad L'Achim

– Saul of Tarsus

There is no victory without a battle and the opposition came out in Tel Aviv.

Saul of Tarsus met Jesus and became a believer; but the persecuting spirit of Saul of Tarsus lives on. Messianic Jews in Israel have repeatedly experienced this persecution. Yad L'Achim (pronounced Yad Lahim) in Hebrew means “extend a hand to your brother”.

The organization in question is an Ultra-Orthodox Jewish group, who's main objective is to drive out all missionaries from Israel and put an end to all Messianic congregations in Israel.

## Letter Bomb

Yad L'Achim is being held responsible for a bomb sent through the mail this spring, to a Messianic family in the city of Ariel. Their 16 year-old son opened a delivered package at the door. It blew up in his face and he was seriously injured. Doctors feared that he might lose his sight, one arm and a leg.

Surgeons speak of a miracle when they talk about his healing process. The boy has retained sight in both eyes and his arm and leg will not have to be amputated.

The boy's dad is David Ortiz, pastor of a Messianic congregation in Ariel.

Ortiz says he has been targeted by Yad L'Achim on other occasions during the campaign. The extremist organization passed out pamphlets warning the public of



*Our campaign ad in Hebrew on the sides and back of city buses in Jerusalem. Calls exceeded all expectations.*

*Below: Some of the campaign staff receiving calls. Street scene in Old Jerusalem. List of callers, quite amazing! Old Jerusalem skyline. Campaign bus ads on 180 city buses in Jerusalem.*



Oritz and his congregation.

Pamphlets have also been distributed in Pastor Meno's (Senior Pastor of the Jerusalem Assembly) residential area in Jerusalem, warning people not to have any contact with him or his congregation's members.

We took a walk through Jerusalem with Tony, our campaign coordinator. Along the way we met a member of Yad L'Achim. This "missionary" for this organization had set up a booth on the street and was offering various literature and information, while engaging passersby in discussions about the Orthodox Jewish faith.

Tony, who had crossed paths with this fellow before, greeted the man and asked, "Do you remember me?" The man gave my friend a deathly stare. Tony ignored the cold reception and briefly shared with the man how Jesus is the Messiah that the Jewish people are longing to see.

The man then jumped up from behind his table and screamed out, in English, "That dog (Jesus) is burning in hell!"

This same Yad L'Achim organization is warning Israelis on their web site about the bus ads, outdoor advertising and other media used in our mega-city campaigns in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv.

In Tel Aviv, some of our city bus ads have been targeted by vandals.

### New threats

This past week, a new anti-missionary organization called "Red Line" has come

to our attention and they threaten to use criminal elements and activities in an even more aggressive and violent manner against Messianic Jews in Israel. Death threats are a common occurrence, but this raises new concerns.

### Congregations grow

Despite opposition, missions outreach continues successfully in Israel. The daily newspaper, Jerusalem Post, reports that 15 thousand people are members of Messianic churches. The numbers may actually be larger than this, since many people do not wish to make their affiliation with Messianic congregations known publicly. There are about 120 such congregations in Israel today. Some assemblies have over 400 members.

The media in Israel has been very quiet about the existence of Messianic Jews until this year. For the first time, Israeli TV made a documentary about a Messianic family. They were presented as a normal, patriotic family; good citizens of Israel.

In 2002, the Jesus film was shown on Channel One. It was a one-time airing. That was the total sum of their acknowledgement of the Gospel message.

But now, Israeli TV channel executives have approached IRR/TV with an interesting proposal: to coproduce a TV series on Holy places from the Bible, for example: Golgotha, the Olive Garden, and Gethsemane.

### Next Phase

The mega-city campaigns continue in Israel. In June-July, the campaign will expand to include the Arabic language. An estimated 2 million Arabic speaking people will potentially be reached.

Stories about Arabs finding personal salvation in Christ have been produced for airing on a TV channel in Israel. The programs have also been subtitled in the Hebrew language. We anticipate that these programs will also be seen on numerous Palestinian TV channels in the West bank and Gaza. Pray for successful negotiation to fulfil this vision. Part of the Arab population lives inside of Israel's borders and part in the West Bank and Gaza. We are preparing to print an evangelistic campaign book in the Arabic language.

Even before the Arabic campaign begins, we already have a praise report: a local TV producer who directed the first Arabic language program for IRR/TV in the series I mentioned above, has come to Christ as a direct result of hearing the powerful witness of a fellow Arab on the program as he gave his testimony of how Jesus Christ changed his life. The power of media knows no bounds when it is powered by the Holy Spirit and testifies to the saving power of Jesus Christ—not only those who watch the programs, but those who work on creating them, can be touched by God and changed forever; inheriting eternal life as a child of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

*Hannu Haukka*





*Bus ads in Jerusalem are highly visible and are attracting much attention.*



*A sign hung over the street in the Jewish section of Jerusalem demands that TV and other evangelical groups demanding to be allowed to preach in public be stopped.*

*Young Orthodox preaching their message in the streets of Jerusalem in an effort to attract young people to join them. Messianic Jews do not enjoy the same privileges.*



*This street musician collects money and sings about a messiah that has already come and died.*



*There is discussion at bus stops. The biggest concern for 30% of Israelis is their security. Iran has threatened to wipe Israel off the map.*



*On Jerusalem's Ben Jehua Street Yad L'Achim "missionary's" message: "That dog (Jesus) is burning in hell!"*



*Jerusalem points the finger at IRR/ ease their outreach campaigns.*



*Ultra Orthodox had their vandals tear campaign ads off the sides of some of the city buses in Tel Aviv.*



*Seven mega monitors located along the busy streets of Tel Aviv tell millions of drivers every day that Jesus is the Messiah of Jews.*

# PRAYER REQUESTS & PRAISE REPORTS

## *Mega-city campaigns in Israel*

These unprecedented mega-city campaigns started in April and go through until August/September in Hebrew, Arabic and Russian languages. Israel is hearing about the Messiah. The response so far has more than anyone had expected.

## *God blesses police lieutenant-colonel in Kiev, Ukraine*

Lieutenant-colonel Vasili Peregenets testimony was presented on TV and giant billboard ads during IRR/TV's 30-day mega-city campaign held last November in Kiev, Ukraine. His bold statements against corruption cost him his job, he was abruptly fired. A few months later he was rehired and promoted to police assistant chief replacing the very person who fired him. It seems God has a sense of humor.

## *Mega-city campaign in Central Asian city of Naberezhnyje Chelny*

That mega-city campaign started in the beginning of May. At the moment they have received almost four thousand calls at the call center. This is incredible! The people of Naberezhnyje Chelny are mostly Muslim.

## *Slow death for Russia...*

Things are not going in a good direction in Russia. By 2005 the average age of men and women in Russia had declined below levels set 40 years earlier. After the fall of communism 16 years ago over 12 million people more have died than were born. The population is shrinking. The reason for the dramatic increase in fatalities is clear: health problems, high abortion rate, accidental deaths, homicide and suicide. Also their love affair with vodka is legendary. Alcohol abuse is extremely high.

## *Storm clouds threaten Central Asian harvest fields*

Turkmenistan has been the most closed country in the world in regards to the Gospel. In Uzbekistan You can no longer openly preach the Gospel. We are seeing similar warning signs that Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan will be closing down to the Gospel. At the same time God has blessed 20 students, mostly from Uzbekistan to attend media missions training courses hosted by IRR/TV Ministries in Russia.

## *A Miracle of for children in Russia's prisons*

IRR/TV continues to deliver love aid packages that include: underwear, winter/seasonal clothing, boots, socks, personal hygiene kit, and food that children's prisons lack. — Watch a short video on Russia's children's prison camps at: [www.irrtv.org](http://www.irrtv.org)



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