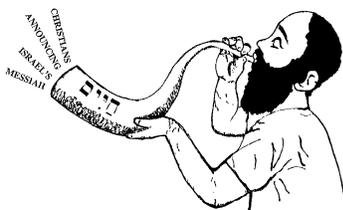


# CHAIM TIMES

The Newsletter of CHAIM, "CHRistians Announcing Israel's Messiah"

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## Peace in the Middle East... Is Real Shalom Possible?

I'm often asked what I think about the situation in Israel. This little strip of land is always in the news! Christians are naturally interested in this topic.

New Covenant believers have a geographical connection with Israel. The gospel went out from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth. Locations in Israel and the surrounding countries are intertwined with biblical history. Many want to visit Israel to see the places spoken of in the Bible.

We sing about the "Little Town of Bethlehem," and are alarmed at news reports about terrorists occupying the Church of the Nativity. We read of Jesus calming the Sea of Galilee, then hear about the Golan Heights, a strategic position overlooking Galilee. The gospels tell of Jesus going to Jerusalem, and we realize Jerusalem is today a bone of contention between Jews and Palestinians. We meditate on Jesus' baptism and are troubled by the violence that goes on over the Jordan River's West Bank.

We have a historical connection with the Jewish people that we are continually confronted with in the pages of Holy Scripture. Jesus was a Jew, as a matter of fact *the ultimate Jew!* All who follow him are children of Abraham by faith. We cannot avoid the realization that Abraham's natural descendants are at each others' throats, and we are deeply saddened and troubled by this.

Christians have a natural interest in Israel for these historical, literary, and geographical reasons tied up with the Biblical story. We also are very aware of the implications in terms of the worldwide political situation and the possibility that war on a large scale could be ignited by a spark in the tinder box of the Middle East. There seems to be so little hope of peace between people who traditionally greet one another with *Shalom* and *Salaam* (Hebrew and Arabic words meaning peace.)

And there are theological issues. Has God promised anything regarding ethnic Israel? Good people are on all sides of this hotly debated topic. Among Reformed folk there are many points of view. Great men like Puritan John Owen spoke of the revival of the Jewish people and their restoration to the land. Others see the Jewish people as simply one of the peoples of the earth, certainly with a special history. What are the implications of the fact that the Kingdom of God is no longer centered in one geographical location or ethnic group? The meek now inherit the whole earth. Does that mean that the earthly Israel is no longer important? Are the Jewish people no longer of any special concern at all? And what about the Arabs? What is the answer? **The Westminster Larger Catechism states:**

*In the second petition...Thy kingdom come... acknowledging ourselves and all mankind to be by nature under the dominion of sin and Satan, we pray, that the kingdom of sin and Satan may be destroyed, the gospel propagated throughout the world, the Jews called, the fullness of the Gentiles brought in; the church furnished with all gospel officers and ordinances, purged from corruption, countenanced and maintained by the civil magistrate: that the ordinances of Christ may be purely dispensed, and made effectual to the converting of those that are yet in their sins, and the confirming, comforting, and building up of those that are already converted: that Christ would rule in our hearts here, and hasten the time of his second coming, and our reigning with him forever: and that he would be pleased so to exercise the kingdom of his power in all the world, as may best conduce to these ends.* (WLC answer to question 191)

**Surely this is our answer!** We are to pray for the gospel going forth to all peoples, *and this certainly includes ethnic Israel.* It includes the Palestinians, Jordanians, Egyptians, etc., too. But it is interesting the note that the Catechism especially singles out the Jewish people as a specific prayer interest. Romans 11:12 tells us their restoration to faith will be a special blessing. We are to pray for the advancement of God's rule in the hearts of men. We are to look for the political world to be influenced by the gospel. We are to pray that governments allow the gospel to be freely proclaimed.

**Let us hold firm to this confessional statement!** Let us resolve to pray for Jewish and Arab believers in Jesus to be built up in their faith in the midst of this crisis. Let us pray that there would be revival among Israelis and Palestinians and that they would beat their swords into ploughshares as both peoples have their hearts changed through Messiah's conquering love! Let us pray that just governments are established that do not attempt to hinder or persecute the work of the Kingdom. Surely you can agree to this, no matter what your eschatology might be! Let us hope and pray for the day when Jewish and Arab brothers and sisters, sons of Abraham by natural genealogy, together worship the God of Abraham through the Eternal Son, Jesus.



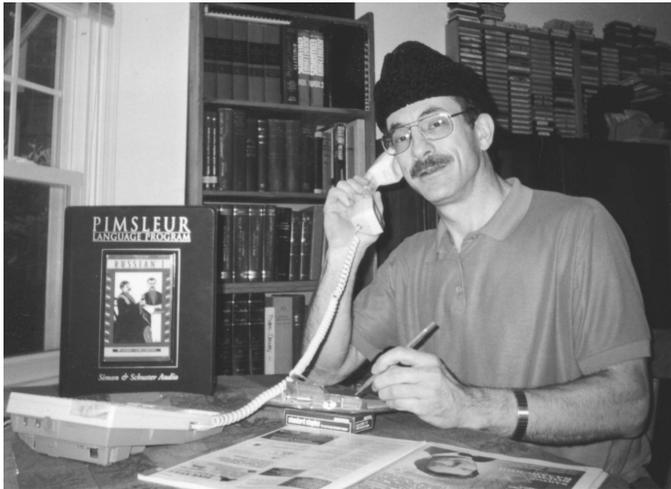
May these ethnic sons of Abraham become united in peace through being united to the one who brings peace with God.

The Messiah is the only true and lasting *Shalom* and *Salaam*.



# CHAIM MINISTRY UPDATES

This is shaping up to be a very busy summer! We always like to include pictures, as we are able, though some of what we do is hard to photograph! Here are some photos that give you some “picture” of what we are involved in!



**Rev. Rick dons his “Russian hat” to call Russian Jewish businesses to offer a visit & the loan of a Bible.** He uses a little conversational Russian and there have been many exciting positive responses! (He doesn’t wear a *literal* Russian hat when he calls, but it makes a better picture!)

## Rock of Israel PCA Congregational Plant

We have been very involved in getting this new congregation going! Rick Anderson makes phone calls, as pictured above, participates in leadership meetings, and ushers at the worship services as he is able. Fred Klett helps lead the worship singing and playing guitar, flute, and sax, and helping to develop and write new music. He also preaches from time to time, goes door to door with PCA MTW missionary Jon Eide and also participates on the leadership team. Jean Klett picks up people who need a ride to worship on Sundays. Volunteer Marko Malyj does a great deal behind the scenes in music, planning, leadership, and translation. Our friends Rich and Lauren Kretzer, who host a CHAIM home fellowship, help through Rich’s excellent guitar and mandolin skills and Lauren’s gifts with refreshments and also helping to pick up people who need rides. Our talented friend Urfan, our first Russian-speaking contact, plays bass in the worship band. His sister-in-law, Seville, also sings. Tim, met at Tenth PCA in Philadelphia during a Sunday School class Fred taught, sings and plays piano. So you can see, CHAIM has played a very strategic role with Rock of Israel!

We all know we are blessed to have PCA MNA Congregational Planter Ilya Berdichevsky to serve as founding pastor. Pray for Pnina Berdichevsky who is due to give birth in August! Pray also for new birth to occur in abundance among the many Russian-speaking Jews (and Ukrainians, Uzbeks, Muslims, etc.!) who we visit and who visit the congregation!

Pray for Fred Klett as he joins sister ministry CWI in London July 13-26 to help train & lead volunteers in street & door-to-door ministry among very Orthodox Jews!



## CHAIM’S SOUTHERN OUTPOST!

We are very excited about new Volunteer Staffers Todd and Sandy York at Briarwood PCA in Birmingham, Alabama! Pray for this delightful couple!

Sandy is from a prominent Jewish family in Alabama. Todd, though a Gentile, has some Jewish ancestry, as well. Lately he has been enjoying reading *The Joys of Yiddish*. Alabama is not exactly known for its large Jewish population, but Birmingham has three synagogues, a bagel shop, a Jewish deli, and there is a significant Jewish neighborhood near Briarwood PCA, one of the largest churches in the South. There is a good-sized core group of interest at Briarwood with an interest in the Jewishness of the gospel and sharing the love of Messiah with Jewish friends. Fred Klett has visited Briarwood twice recently, once for a Passover presentation during the Easter season and, more recently, a Sharing Messiah Seminar. Rick Anderson has also done his drama on Isaiah and shared his testimony in Sunday School. Pray for this new ministry, for Todd and Sandy to have God’s wisdom and blessing, and for a winsome ministry to be developed that will be sensitive to the Southern Jewish community, which feels so surrounded in the “Bible Belt.” Welcome Todd and Sandy! Shalom Y’all!

Fred recently taught at **Church of the Saviour** in Wayne, PA & **Briarwood PCA** in Birmingham, AL. He’s teaching a summer course at **Reformed Theological Seminary** in Washington, DC.



*Training people in evangelism multiplies our impact.*