



Caspari Center NEWS



*Equipping
the next generation
of Jewish believers
in Jesus*

"Learning in order to teach"



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"To tell the truth, I liked everything!"

Since 1997, Caspari Center has arranged one-day seminars for people working in children's ministry in Messianic congregations. Lately the seminars have been held twice a year upon the request of participants. Over the years, the number of participants has tripled, reaching the maximum possible in the premises currently used for the gatherings.

In March 2008, 150 Shabbat School teachers from 30 different congregations all over Israel gathered at Caspari Center's Shabbat School Teacher's Seminar. The topic for this seminar was "Learning In Order to Teach." Never before have we had so many participants. Even before the registration deadline, people had to be put on a waiting list, as we quickly reached the maximum number of participants for the premises of Beit Asaf congregation, the venue for the seminar. On the day of the seminar, it was inspiring to watch the participants arrive and immediately start greeting friends from other congregations and looking at the displays of the Messianic publishers and children's ministries represented.

As the seminar was about to begin, the hall was packed and all the teachers awaited eagerly for the first teaching session. This was an opportunity for those who normally stand in front of a class to sit back and receive teaching on a variety of subjects. The main lecture this time was on the delicate issue of talking about repentance with children. Then followed a session on teaching our children, who are taught evolution in school, about Creation. The rest of the day included a number of different interactive workshops: how to keep discipline in the classroom, cooperation with parents, and youth work, to mention but a few. And between the sessions the participants could meet with each other, exchange ideas, and inspire one another.

A committee of local members of the Body of Messiah had worked with Caspari staff to plan the event. All the contributors were local believers with years of experience in their field.

Overall, the feedback from participants was extremely positive, and can be summed up in the words of Dimitry, one of the few male participants: "To tell the truth, I liked everything in the seminar!"

Like Dimitry, Anna was also amazed and encouraged by the number of participants. "To meet so many other teachers reminds me of the importance of our work! I am not alone!" she says. "The seminars are the only chance to meet colleagues from all around the country and to exchange thoughts and experiences with them." In the seminars, new teachers get high-quality teaching

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and are equipped with basic practical skills for class discipline, activities, etc., and experienced teachers like Anna get new inspiration to plan their work with children. "After the seminar I always feel challenged to plan the teaching more carefully and to do my work even better. I get plenty of new ideas and I feel enriched!"

Side by side with the growth of the Messianic congregations is the increasing challenge of educating the children. Everyone involved in children's ministry in Israel is aware of the ongoing need for education through seminars like this one. In addition to organizing these seminars, Caspari Center strives to meet the need for ready-to-use children's material in Hebrew. At the seminar, every participant received a set of 11 activity pages about Creation, to be used in their congregation's Shabbat School. Caspari Center's activity book for children, *The Parables of Jesus*, is already in its third printing. A new activity book about Peter, the disciple of Yeshua, is being prepared and will be ready for the next seminar in the fall.

As we look back on a successful seminar, we are still challenged to improve our seminars in the future, and to make the teaching and children's materials more available to all the dedicated people around this country who have a heart for strengthening and educating a new generation of believers in Yeshua.

A Church Reborn Finds Its Roots

How do you revive a church that has been closed for over 70 years in a country that is predominantly Muslim? How do you find pastors and leaders for this church who have a mature and living faith, who can help build a body of believers who can express their faith in the context of their own culture and historical background? This is the challenge facing the Udi-Albanian church in Azerbaijan and their church president, Robert Mobili, a professor of geology by profession, appointed to lead the church in 2002.



Robert and Rafik after the baptism

In May 2006, the Udi people celebrated the reopening of their church in Nic; it had been closed by the Communists in the 1930s. And so the church of the Udi people (a minority of about 4,000 in Azerbaijan), which has a historical Christian tradition going back to the apostle Thaddeus, was reborn. The next step was to start work on translating the Bible to the Udi language, and to form and equip leadership for this reborn church. In this process they have been supported by the Norwegian Humanitarian Enterprises' work in

Azerbaijan, and through them the Caspari Center was approached about organizing a study tour of Israel for three representatives of the church. The goal of this tour was to help them connect to the roots of the Christian faith in the Holy Land – and in the same way as the apostles did, to symbolically bring the good news from Jerusalem back to their home country and their newly revived church.



Visiting the Caspari Center

And so in April of this year the Caspari Center in Jerusalem hosted a group consisting of the church president, Robert, a Bible translator, Rafik, and a young, up and coming leader of the church, Sergey. The tour consisted of visiting the holy sites in Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and the Galilee, a teaching program, and meetings with local believers in the country, both from the

historic churches such as the Syrian Orthodox Church and from the Messianic community.

However, the most important part of the trip was the baptism of Robert and Rafik in the Jordan River. The two had received baptismal teaching in their home country and had been waiting a long time for the opportunity to

be baptized in Israel. The simple but powerful ceremony took place in the blistering sun at the baptismal site south of the Sea of Galilee. Participating were three brothers with diverse backgrounds: Sergey from the Udi church, “Jacob” a Messianic believer from an Ethiopian Jewish background, and Knut Høyland of the Caspari Center, from a Lutheran background, all united in giving support to the brothers who were baptized and praying for God’s wisdom and mercy to guide them in the important tasks they would face when they returned to their home in Azerbaijan.

When the group first arrived in Israel they asked to visit the Jerusalem church. It took us a few moments to realize that they were assuming that the New Testament Jerusalem church was still alive and active in Jerusalem. And of course in many ways it is. Perhaps not as one church with a building you can go and visit, but through all the believers in this city and around the world who have our spiritual roots in the church of the apostles. It is a miracle of God to see the fruits of this small church expressed through believers in all parts of the world.

In many ways we all, like the Udi church, have a need and an obligation to connect to our roots in Scripture, in the early church, and in the Jewish heritage we have received through the first believers. And in going back to the roots we see that we can strengthen our unity with believers from all over the world, and hopefully also help the living branches today to bear even more fruit.

For the Caspari Center it was a privilege to play a small part in the rebirth of the Udi-Albanian church, and it is our prayer that just as we have seen the Messianic body in this country being revived and growing over the past decades, our Udi brothers and sisters from Azerbaijan will see a true revival and growth of the believing body in their country in the coming years.

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MEDIA REVIEW



Selected Quotes from the Caspari Media Review

Caspari Center publishes a weekly review of material published in the Israeli press documenting attitudes toward Messianic Jews, the mission, and the Christian faith. To receive the Media Review free of charge by email, send a request to subscriptions@caspari.com or sign up on our website: www.caspari.com/media_review.

In his column reviewing cultural events in Israel in *Ma'ariv* (March 28), Menachem Ben responded very fiercely to the incident in Ariel: “The explosive device which was sent to the house of the Messianic Jews in Ariel and exploded in the face of their fifteen-year-old son is not only a criminal abomination but also a cultural crime against spirituality, faith-belief in God, and the New Testament (a really superb book, hugely interesting, even if it doesn’t match up to the Tanakh) – not to speak of the gross violation of the freedom of religion in Israel, apparently guaranteed by the Declaration of Independence. You don’t have to believe in Yeshu as the Messiah (and I truly don’t) in order to be disgusted and pained by this awful attack (the youth lost two toes).

The Jerusalem Post (May 1) reports that “A group of religious Zionist rabbis have called for a boycott of this year’s International Bible Quiz [for Jewish youth, held on Independence Day] after discovering that one of the four finalists from Israel is a Messianic Jew who believes Jesus is the true Messiah. ‘It is forbidden to give them [the Messianic Jews] legitimacy by allowing them to take part in the quiz,’ says Rabbi Shlomo Aviner. The Education Ministry said in response [...] that the ‘Global Bible Quiz for Jewish Youth’ was open only to Jewish pupils. Regarding Messianic Jews, the pupil in question was Jewish, and therefore was not disqualified from participating.”

Walking with Jesus through the Jewish Calendar

What curriculum is your small group or Bible study class studying next fall? We suggest *Walking with Jesus through the Jewish Calendar*. Based on the book of John, the study looks at the biblical feasts through the eyes of Jesus, His disciples, and the early church. This study promotes better understanding of the Gospel of John through learning

about Jesus in His Israeli Jewish context. It includes the Fall Feasts through Pentecost. You may use it in either weekly or bi-weekly studies. A complete leader's manual supplements individual student work books. Available at www.caspari.com/store or through our North America office.

Student books: \$15.00
Leader's Manual: \$45.00



Ancient and Living Stones

According to a report in the *Jerusalem Post* (April 10), the rate of tourism to Israel over the Passover period this year is expected to rise 30% over the same period last year. "During the Pessah period, new and renovated tourist sites will be open to the public."

A pastor writes, "My trip to Israel is the single most significant thing I have done to deepen my understanding of the biblical story and enlighten my teaching and preaching. It's no wonder some call the land the 'fifth gospel.'"

With as few as 25 people, you and your friends or congregation members can plan an exciting tour of Israel. Trips are designed to meet your needs. In addition to visiting the historic sites of Israel, you'll have opportunities to meet the Living Stones – those believers of today who are shaping the history of the Messianic movement in Israel.

Your trip provides an insider's perspective of Israel that you won't see on CNN, FOX, or the History Channel. Write CaspariUSA@caspari.com for information.

A congregation filled a recent Caspari trip for 40 people in just 3 days! Are you ready to begin planning your trip to the Holy Land?

Interested in Outreach?



Caspari Center is closely affiliated with Apple of His Eye Mission Society. Each year since AOHE began in 1996, they have hosted short-term mission training events, and this summer they will be in Chicago for the Taste of Chicago festival, June 26–July 6. What an opportunity to share the message of Jesus!

Pastor Matt Gunia of Trinity Lutheran Church, Burr Ridge, IL, is the Chicago coordinator. He says: "Every year, over two million people visit the Taste of Chicago. Much of our work will be at this downtown

event. We will also proclaim Christ as we march in the Skokie 4th of July parade and hold a concert in Arlington Heights by famous concert pianist and Jewish Christian Sam Rotman. There are many opportunities for you to share and grow this year."

See the Apple of His Eye website (www.appleofhiseye.org) for details and an application form.

PRAYER REQUESTS

Please pray with us for:

- the people of Israel as they celebrate their 60th year of statehood; pray for the peace of Jerusalem!
- growth in speaking / teaching opportunities.
- steady and increasing funding to help address the needs of Israeli Messianic congregations.
- blessings on the students in the concluding sessions of this year's "Hearts to Serve" leadership training program.
- encouragement for Shabbat School teachers and all students who believe that Yeshua is their Messiah in a Jewish country which does not understand.

We also want to give thanks for the successful Shabbat School seminar and Caspari Center's dedicated workers.

If you would like to know more about the Caspari Center and its activities, write to caspari@caspari.com or visit our website: www.caspari.com

You can support our work by prayer, volunteering, or financial gifts to help with individual projects or the general work of the center.