

Caspari Center

www.caspari.com

Supporting Jewish Believers in Jesus through Education and Research

Covenant Faithfulness

Winter 2007

I am often asked whether Caspari Center takes a particular stand on geo-politics, the “end-times,” or other issues which relate to the State of Israel. Let me emphasize a few of the principles that guide our ministry as instructed in the Apostle Paul’s letter to the Romans.

We believe that Jesus is Israel’s Messiah. God’s covenant faithfulness to Israel is expressed most fully in him. Above all else, it is our duty to make this known. Some Christians choose to demonstrate their fidelity to Jewish people by avoiding evangelism to Jews because it offends many of them. But we believe with Paul that the Gospel “is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Gentile” (Romans 1:16).



We believe that the Jewish people remain significant to God’s plan of salvation. Paul says, “God has not rejected his people [Israel]” (Romans 11:1). The New Testament writings do not contradict God’s historic connection to the Jewish people even though, in Messiah, Gentiles now participate fully in God’s covenant promises.

We believe that Jewish believers in Jesus are a special sign of God’s covenant faithfulness to the Jewish people. Paul says, “At the present time there is a remnant [of Israel], chosen by grace” (Romans 11:5). That remnant has always been present in the church and is growing dynamically today.

And we believe that the destinies of Gentiles and Jews are bound together. Paul says that when Jewish people embrace faith in Jesus, it will be “life from the dead” for all of us (Romans 11:12, 15). In celebrating Messiah’s return, Jews and Gentiles will raise their voices together to worship the Lamb (Revelation 7:9).

Modern geo-politics greatly concern all of us. It is impossible to ignore the anti-Semitism that is at the heart of much of the rhetoric we hear from Islamic groups such as Hamas and Hezbollah, and from regional leaders such as Iran’s Ahmadinejad and Syria’s Assad. We do not feel that responsible Christians can ignore the historic connection between the Jewish people and the land of Israel; nor do we feel that responsible Christians can ignore the significant threat to Israel’s existence that these anti-Semitic groups and regimes represent.



God’s covenant faithfulness to Jews will not come at the expense of the Palestinians or any other people group. As we pray for the peace of Jerusalem and the salvation of Israel, we are

embracing God’s just and compassionate agenda for all humankind. Paul concludes that “God has consigned all to disobedience, that He may have mercy on all” (Romans 11:32).



While there is diversity of opinion in the Israeli Messianic movement and within our own organization about politics and theology, we agree that the dynamic growth of the Messianic community in Israel and abroad is a hopeful sign. We embrace our responsibility to support the growth of Jewish believers in Jesus and challenge Christians worldwide to share in that responsibility. Whatever distracts us from that call leads us away from God’s will.

Steve Engstrom, International Director

Caspari Center

You Can Help Change a Nation

by Kathi Graham, North American Director

We all need to feel that we are making a difference, but this frequently expressed desire is often difficult to achieve. Caspari Center offers you an incredible opportunity to help change a nation.

We have received a \$20,000 matching grant from an anonymous foundation to be used toward our "Hearts to Serve" Leadership Training Course in Israel. This means that every dollar you give will be doubled! When you donate \$50 toward the training of these emerging leaders, the program receives \$100. A gift of \$100 becomes \$200, \$200 becomes \$400, and so on.



Why is leadership training so important in Israel? Unlike in the U.S., where pastors have plenty of seminars and institutes at their disposal, there is limited training for leaders in Israel, where there are estimated to be only about 6,000 believers.

A Messianic congregation usually begins as a bible class facilitated by a lay person—likely a new believer himself—in someone's living room. As they outgrow their home settings, congregations develop with leaders who are thrust into high levels of responsibility without adequate training.

Caspari Center's Leadership Training Course, currently in its fourth year, is a unique program that equips young leaders with practical skills to effectively lead these congregations. Our three-year course provides these leaders with hands-on training

in program development, counseling (critical for a society living with the daily threat of terrorism), conflict resolution, mentoring skills, cultural diversity and more. Each year, the course is filled to capacity with a waiting list.

The Body of Messiah is growing in Israel, and there is a significant need to expand our program to accommodate the young, innovative leaders of today while preparing for the future that God has planned for Jewish believers in Jesus.

Make a difference. Help change a nation by giving toward this matching grant.

Tours to Israel

Ancient and Living Stones

Experience a spiritually significant tour of biblical and historic sites with unique opportunities to interact with "Living Stones"—modern-day Jewish believers living in Israel. Our tours are safe, affordable, and led by licensed guides who share our faith.

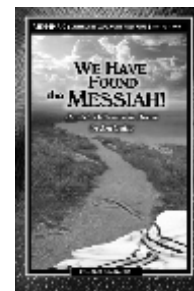
Tours already scheduled for 2007:

- June 1-10 from Nashville
- Nov 2-11 from Chicago
- Nov 9-18 from Indianapolis

Contact the Caspari Center U.S. office for details on these or to learn how to schedule a tour for your group.

Subscribe to Mishkan

As a Caspari Center supporter, you have likely heard of Mishkan, our quarterly journal dedicated to biblical and theological thinking on issues related to Jewish Evangelism, Hebrew-Christian/Messianic-Jewish identity, and Jewish Christian relations. But are you a subscriber?



Why not consider trying Mishkan for a year? Get four enlightening issues for just US\$36. Subscribe online at www.caspari.com/mishkan or call our U.S. office at 630.668.3328.

The Caspari Center sincerely values your support of the work we are doing to strengthen and grow the Messianic movement in Israel, as well as increase the worldwide church's awareness and understanding of Jewish believers in Jesus. In the past year, you have helped us serve over 150 Israeli leaders from over 30 congregations with strategic programming for leadership development and congregational growth.

We now offer direct withdrawal and online donation options through our secure web site. You can specify any amount you wish to be deducted automatically from your credit card or checking account, and spread your donations out quarterly, monthly, weekly or bi-weekly through this plan.

To set up your giving plan, please go to www.caspari.com/donations, and click on the link to "online donations," or call our North American office at (630) 668-3328 for assistance.

Hearts to Serve in Israel

by Lisa Loden, Israel Director

“Hearts to Serve,” Caspari’s leadership training course, provides a unique opportunity for new and emerging leaders in the Messianic community in Israel to receive practical skills for leadership. Apart from “on the job training,” there is no other venue in Israel that offers the type of curriculum available through this course.

Participants in the course—now in its fourth successful year—must first have the desire and the heart to serve in their local congregations. Since a prerequisite for acceptance in the course is recommendation and endorsement by their senior leaders, those who take the course are considered to be the new wave of leadership for the Israeli Messianic body.

The course is open to both men and women. The typical student is male, between the ages of 25 and 33, and serving in a local Messianic congregation either in youth work or as a home group leader. These students are closely involved in their local congregations and serve in positions of influence. What they learn in Caspari’s leadership training course can be immediately implemented in their ministries in the local congregations.

One of the students in the first year of the course had just been made a pastor/elder in his local congregation. He left full-time employment in a secular, high-tech position to take on this role, and the only training he had was a short course in a Bible school prior to immigrating from the Ukraine to Israel ten years earlier. In the “Hearts to Serve” course, he learned how to refine his vision, manage his time, and deal with the increased stresses of pastoral responsibility, as well as the importance of good communication, working with cross cultural communication issues, etc.

Since he was an immigrant to Israel, sitting under the teaching of veteran Israeli Messianic teachers enabled him to learn from their connectedness to the Israeli experience. As a result of the “Hearts to Serve” course, he is serving his congregation more knowledgeably and effectively.

This new pastor/elder’s wife was also a participant in the course. She participated for three of the four years, taking one year off to have a baby. She serves as the coordinator of the Shabbat School program in the congregation. She also organizes inter-congregational camps and activities for children. Studying in the “Hearts

to Serve” course has enabled her to network with other congregations and has equipped her for efficient management of her work.

Still in their thirties, this couple has five children, and they are very much involved in the training and teaching of children and young people in their family, in their local congregation, and in other congregations around the country. They tell us that the skills they have acquired in the “Hearts to Serve” course have enriched their ministries and contributed to their development as leaders and role models for the next generation.

Another third year participant has been joined this year by his son, his daughter and her husband. They are all involved in various congregational and inter-congregational ministries including student work, prison ministry, and drug and alcohol rehabilitation.

This family is Arab-Christian, a testament to an exciting component of the “Hearts to Serve” course which provides a multigenerational, multicultural learning framework that mirrors the Israeli context, the congregations of believers in Yeshua in Israel, and the beauty of the inclusive Body of Messiah.

Although the student body is multicultural and multilingual, the language of instruction is Hebrew. All lecturers in the “Hearts to Serve” course are members of the Messianic community in Israel, and they represent the best possible teaching available. The teachers’ expertise and diversity offer opportunities for the students to become acquainted with a variety of people and views from within the broad Messianic community. This contributes to the high level of cooperation between congregations that is enjoyed in Israel.

The students, in their rich diversity, have the ability to positively impact the future of the Messianic community and to effectively minister in the multicultural Israeli context.

Editors Note: You can make an impact on this program and the growth of the Messianic community in Israel. Help us meet the challenge of raising \$20,000 this year for the matching grant received from a national foundation for this program. Send your check, designated for “Leadership Training,” to our Caspari U.S. office or go to www.caspari.com/donate to give online.



Programs in Need of Your Prayers

There are more Jewish children in Israel today than at any other time in history since Jesus walked the earth, and Jews from throughout the world immigrating to Israel create a huge opportunity for the Messianic movement.

Please pray for Caspari Center as we work to support congregations and families of new believers to remain strong in their beliefs and resilient against the pressures of a secular culture.

Leadership Training: Hearts to Serve

We see God doing great things in Israel. In the six decades that the State of Israel has existed, its community of believers has grown dynamically. But as these congregations grow, so do their challenges for training emerging leaders and reaching the next generation.

Please pray for our "Hearts to Serve" program and for the emerging leaders it equips with the practical skills they need to effectively lead and counsel their congregations.

Shabbat School Teachers' Seminars

Unlike in the U.S., the great majority of Israel's teachers are first generation believers and the primary source of education and counseling in faith for the youth of their congregations.

Please pray for the volunteers who participate in our seminars and for the believing children they guide and mentor. Pray for their spiritual protection in a society where they are vastly outnumbered by non-believers.

Training Courses for Immigrant Teachers & Leaders

Caspari Center has been working with the Ethiopian Messianic congregations for over 6 years. While the community is committed to retaining the Ethiopian culture, their children are rapidly assimilating into the dominant Israeli Hebrew-speaking secular culture.

Pray for this community as they strive to find ways to use the Hebrew language in order to teach and keep their children in the faith.

Please also pray with us for...

- Peace in Israel and throughout the Middle East.
- Oskar Skarsaune and his team as they continue their research to give Jewish believers in Jesus access to their own history and so that both Jews and Christians may be challenged to rethink common misperceptions.
- The global body of Messiah to grow in its support of Jewish evangelism, and for Christians to be encouraged through our work to tap into the Jewish roots of their faith and gain a deeper understanding of God's covenant faithfulness.
- The Caspari Center staff and volunteers.

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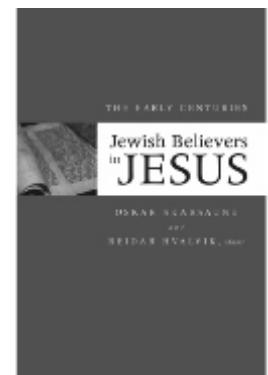
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