



Caspari Center

# NEWS

December 2012



"Equipping His people  
for works of service,  
so that the body of  
Messiah may be built up"  
Ephesians 4:12

30  
YEARS  
1982 - 2012

## Celebrating 30 Years of Caspari Center Ministry!

Caspari Center celebrates its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. Throughout these 30 years of ministry in Jerusalem, from our beginnings in a small flat on French Hill until today, the vision has remained the same: To strengthen the local body of believers in Jesus (Yeshua) in Israel. For 30 years we have provided study resources and educational programs to help local congregations raise up a new generation of believers who will stand firm in their faith, witness, and service for Yeshua.

On November 15, 2012, the Caspari Center celebrated its anniversary with a book launch and lecture evening at our ministry center in Jerusalem. Over 100 people were present to mark the occasion, 30 years to the day after the center was inaugurated in 1982.



It is natural on an occasion like this to take a fresh look at our work and ministry and to try to identify some identity markers that have formed the ministry in the past, continue to define what the Caspari Center is today, and give us a trajectory for the future.

*Teaching of Scripture  
and history go hand in  
hand with the calling to  
share the gospel.*

The first such identity marker is that the academic study and teaching of Scripture and history go hand in hand with the calling to share the gospel and to build up the body of believers.

The center is named in honor of Carl Paul Caspari – a Jew from Germany who came to a living faith in Jesus/Yeshua and was baptized in 1838. He became a professor of Old Testament in Oslo, Norway, and served as chairman of the Norwegian Church Ministry to Israel from 1866 until his death in 1892. After his death he was described as a "loveable scholar, a humble Christian and a true Israelite in whom there is no deceit." Although internationally known for his scholarly research, he always had a heart for reaching people with the gospel, and especially those from his own people. We hope and trust that this dual focus on academic studies and outreach in the work of the Caspari Center is a fitting tribute to his memory.

The second identity marker is that Caspari Center, through our courses and publications, is a platform and meeting place where believers can listen to each other and engage on issues that are vital for our growth as believers and as a body in this land. This is expressed in our involvement in the development of Messianic theology, which is very much an ongoing process of dialogue, one where new and exciting perspectives are brought forth. This is also expressed through our involvement in reconciliation work among Messianic Jews and Christian Palestinians.

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The third identity marker is that the Caspari Center is a partnership. There are countless individuals, mission societies, ministries, churches, and institutions – both international and local – that make our work here possible. It is incredible to know that there are so many across the globe who share a common purpose with Caspari and who carry this ministry through their prayers, their time and work, and their financial contributions.

The last and perhaps most important identity marker is that Caspari Center is a movement organization. That is, we are part of a larger movement in this land. And it is an honor to be able to work alongside congregations and organizations to help strengthen the body of Christ in Israel. As we work to train teachers and leaders for children's and youth ministry, and as we work to strengthen immigrant congregations around the country, we are taking part in what God is doing among his people in Israel today. The growth we have seen in the movement over the past 30 years is a true testimony to God's faithfulness to his people.

During the inauguration service for the Caspari Center in 1982 those who were gathered sang:

"Great is thy faithfulness, Great is thy faithfulness; Morning by morning new mercies I see.  
All I have needed thy hand hath provided; Great is thy faithfulness, Lord unto me."



What the future holds we cannot know, but no matter what happens we do know that God is faithful, to this ministry and to his body in this land. And we hope that you will stand with us in prayer and support in the years to come, so that we can continue to see the fruits of this ministry that God brings forth.

Knut Høyland

## Chosen to Follow

### – Jewish Believers through History and Today

# CHOSEN TO FOLLOW

To mark our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the Caspari Center has published a new book titled *Chosen to Follow*.

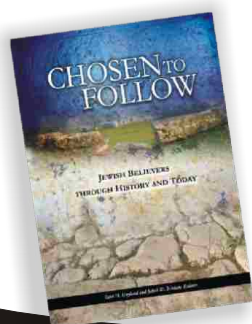
At the inauguration of the center, on November 15, 1982, Ronald Lewis gave a lecture titled "The Quest for a Hebrew Christian Theology." On November 15, 2012, the Caspari Center celebrated its anniversary with a book launch and lecture evening. And the topic on the agenda was very much the same as 30 years ago. Although today we speak of Messianic Jewish theology and not Hebrew Christian theology, the fact remains that this quest still continues.

*Chosen to Follow* is a compilation of 15 articles written by Messianic and Christian leaders and scholars from around the world and edited by Caspari staff. The book explores various aspects of the ongoing formation of Messianic theology and identity.

How does the Messianic movement interact and engage with the church and with the wider Jewish community? What is the role of Torah in the life and practice of Messianic believers? What is the movement's role in Israeli society and in reaching the Jewish people and all nations with the good news about Jesus? These are some of the topics dealt with in the book.

An important component of the work of the Caspari Center is to facilitate and encourage theological discussion of these issues in order to better equip believers to face the challenges the future will bring, and to inform and challenge churches around the world to study the Jewish roots of our faith and engage in ministry among the Jewish people. It is our hope that *Chosen to Follow* will contribute to this.

Our 15 authors come from a variety of backgrounds. They all have their unique styles and opinions, some of which may be perceived as challenging and even provocative. Nevertheless, there is a need for a variety of voices to be heard in order to fully engage with one another on the important issues that face us. Three of these voices (David Zadok, Lisa Loden, and Richard Harvey) presented their contributions as the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary was celebrated in Jerusalem.



It is our hope that the body of Jewish believers in Jesus in Israel and around the world will continue to grow in the coming years as it has during the 30 years of the Caspari Center's existence. We pray that through this book and the continuing work of the Caspari Center we will be able to support and strengthen the movement in the years to come to be an even greater source of blessing for the church, for the Jewish people, and, ultimately, for all the peoples of the world.

*Chosen to Follow* is published in English. A Hebrew translation will be available in 2013. You can find more information or purchase the book by visiting our website, [www.caspari.com](http://www.caspari.com).



# Jesus the Jew – A Light to the Nations

Caspari Center recently organized a missiology course titled “Jesus the Jew – A Light to the Nations,” which took place November 13-22. When we first publicized the course, a few eyebrows were raised. People wanted to know what it was really about. In Israel, and all over the Western world, the word *missionary* has become a mocking description assigned to people who force their religion on others. In spite of existing prejudices, we wanted to take hold of this theme and approach it through both local and global perspectives. The truth is that mission is at the core of our faith in Jesus – a living community cannot exist without reaching out to others. At the same time, there is always the question of how to do this in a way that is sensitive to the reality and context of the people we are working with while remaining faithful to the original message, the gospel.

Israel is where the first missionary movement came into being. From here, the Word of the Lord began its journey to the nations, and therefore it is natural to come back here to examine the roots and foundation of the commission. The course drew 28 students from the local body and abroad. They came to learn the origins of the mission and their application in their own ministries, while recharging themselves for the Great Commission around the world. In addition to hearing from experts on various topics, the students also experienced historical sites in Jerusalem and Galilee.

Sanna Erelä



## media review



Caspari Center publishes a weekly review of material from the Israeli press documenting attitudes toward Messianic Jews, the mission, and the Christian faith. To receive the Media Review free of charge by email, sign up on our website at [www.caspari.com](http://www.caspari.com)

### Churches Being Vandalized in Israel

***The Jerusalem Post*, October 24; *Kochav Yizrael*, October 5, 2012**

*The Jerusalem Post* (Oct. 24) reported on the solidarity event which took place at the Narkis Street Congregation in Jerusalem – one of the growing number of churches to have been vandalized in the past year. The church invited representatives from the Foreign Ministry, the Ministry of Interior, and the Public Security Ministry, as well as members of the city council and rabbis from a number of nearby synagogues, to attend. The purpose of the event was “to urge law enforcement to find and arrest the vandals perpetrating these attacks.” Reverend Chuck Kopp said, “We made it clear that we hold no grudge or personal animosity or are seeking revenge. But we feel for the sake of civic order that the arm of the law needs to take care of the situation.”

In an op-ed piece, Eddie Gal, writing for *Kochav Yizrael* (Oct. 5), took up the same issue. “What do [the perpetrators] really think they will achieve, and how will it further their cause both locally and globally?” Gal admits that he can’t think of a single reason for the attacks, and his anger is palpable as he asks, “What the hell do we want from Jesus now? Why paint all sorts of insulting pictures on churches and monasteries that bear no connection to reality? Isn’t this the last thing we need – another bitter argument with the Christians? . . . Why play with fire?” Although Gal is angry with the vandals, he points a finger at the security forces, blaming them for allowing these attacks to go on year after year, without the arrest of a single person. “I presume,” says Gal, “that the security forces have the means to arrest these ridiculous people, but that it is low on their priority list.”

***If you would like to know more about the Caspari Center and its activities, write to [caspari@caspari.com](mailto:caspari@caspari.com) or visit our website, [www.caspari.com](http://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.***

# Stones of Remembrance

*I remember the days of long ago; I meditate on all your works and consider what your hands have done. (Ps. 143:5)*

Not long ago, it seemed as though everyone around me was announcing one blessing after another: a new job, a new baby, unexpected financial provision. I was happy for these friends and acquaintances and did my best to rejoice with those who were rejoicing, but I will confess to feelings of envy. When would it be my turn to have some good news to share?

Everyone else's sunny good news threw my own difficult circumstances into stark relief. I was in the midst of a very difficult trial with no end in sight. When we're facing a challenge, those around us may offer the well-meaning advice that we should count our blessings and remember the things God has given us. I am learning that an even more meaningful expression of gratitude to him occurs when I move past listing what God has given me toward remembering who he is and what he has done.

As I listed my own blessings in an attempt to counteract my nagging jealousy, I felt a little like Maria, in the 1965 film *The Sound of Music*, singing the classic "My Favorite Things": "Raindrops on roses and whiskers on kittens . . ." My own list of favorite things included family, friends, a home, food, and clothing. Thanking God for these temporal gifts is indeed a helpful practice that resets my soul's thermostat from self-pity toward gratitude.

Scripture entreats us to both give thanks for the gifts God has given us (Ps. 21:5–7; 128) and remember what he has done for us (Ps. 77:11; 143:5). A three-dimensional version of this command to remember his works is reenacted in Joshua 4. After 40 years in the desert, Joshua and the Israelites were about to cross the Jordan and possess the Promised Land. The land flowing with milk and honey (Exod. 3:8) was a gift from God to his chosen people. He parted the waters of the Jordan, forming a supernatural welcome mat as the people prepared to enter their new home.

Before the waters flowed back into the riverbed, God gave Joshua an unusual instruction: "Choose twelve men from among the people, one from each tribe, and tell them to take up twelve stones from the middle of the Jordan, from right where the priests are standing, and carry them over with you and put them down at the place where you stay tonight" (Josh. 4:2–3). Each man hefted a stone onto his shoulder, and the 12 stones were stacked in the encampment at Gilgal.

God told Joshua, "In the future, when your children ask you, 'What do these stones mean?' tell them that the flow of the Jordan was cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord. When it crossed the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. These stones are to be a memorial to the people of Israel forever" (Josh. 4:6–7).

These mute, damp rocks testified of God's mighty works: his deliverance, his protection, and his provision. He did for his people what they could never do for themselves. In doing so, he showed them who he is: a holy and all-powerful Redeemer, a loving Father. This act of stacking rocks that had been covered by water since the time of the flood was a way for Israel's generations to touch evidence of a miracle.

Those 12 rocks remind us today that even the most wonderful things given to us by God are temporal, but his works stand unchanging and immovable for all eternity. Give thanks for the blessings you've received, but don't stop there. Honor the Giver by remembering who he is and the marvelous things he has done.

Michelle Van Loon

## Prayer Requests

Pray with us:

- Give thanks for the 30 years of Caspari Center's ministry and pray for the future development of our work in serving the body of Messiah in Israel and abroad.
- Give thanks for the publication of our anniversary book and pray that it may be a valuable tool for local believers as well as Christians around the world.
- Pray for the leadership training course to be held in Ashkelon in December and January, and for the lecture series planned to be held in Sderot in the coming month.
- Pray for the new singles' advisory group that has been formed to plan and implement new activities for the singles' ministry.
- Continue to pray for the unstable situation in the Middle East. Pray for all who are suffering as a result of the unrest in Gaza and the south of Israel. Pray for peace in the region.