



Caspari Center NEWS

June 2012

Equipping
the next generation
of Jewish believers
in Jesus



**“They
need to
know that
they’re
not alone.”**

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The Burden for the Next Generation

This issue of our newsletter is dedicated to youth ministry in Israel. We would like to start by introducing you to a good friend of Caspari Center's, **Joel Goldberg**, who has much experience in youth ministry and is also the founder and leader of Netivah, an organization that focuses on youth.

What drew you to youth ministry?

I realized the need for ministry to youth while still in my teen years, watching friends of mine fall away from the Lord, thinking something more should have been done to help them. And so, as soon as I was no longer considered a youth myself, I got involved in youth ministry. About 10 years ago, I decided to focus on full-time youth ministry. I established Netivah Center in 2005, with a view to organize national youth conferences and encourage youth ministry in congregations. Three years ago, we branched out and began organizing national soldiers' conferences and army preparatory courses as well.

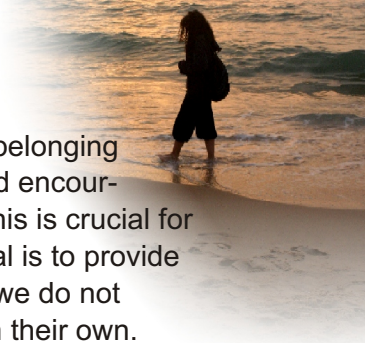
Can you describe the need for the kind of ministry in which Netivah is engaged?

Teenagers need a sense of community, a sense of belonging to a group of like-minded, similar people. Teens need encouragement; they need to know that they're not alone. This is crucial for the development and formation of their identity. Our goal is to provide teens with a support group, with a sense of belonging. If we do not provide them with such a social network, they will find one on their own.

At Netivah conferences, youth groups from congregations all over Israel come together with their congregational youth leaders to learn from the Word and gain memorable new experiences. Our attitude is that youth ministry should begin and end in the local congregations. We encourage the local congregations to shepherd their teenage congregants. So, in addition to the youth conferences, we organize training seminars to equip youth leaders. I also visit congregations to speak to parents and youth leaders about the needs of their teens.

What are the unique challenges of doing youth ministry in Israel?

In Israel, many believing youth are quite isolated. It's not unusual for a Messianic teen to be the only believer in their school. The congregations here tend to be smaller, with a proportionately small number of youth. Most congregations can't afford to assign a full-time youth leader. Many youth leaders are untrained short-



term volunteers, still figuring out what they want to do with their lives, just barely out of the teen years themselves. There are also cultural challenges. Many new immigrant families are under a great deal of financial duress, and the parents can't always give their children the attention they need. Geographically speaking, it is a challenge to gather all the youth, as they are scattered across the country.

What is the most rewarding part of your work?

It gives me tremendous joy to have a young adult, an "alumnus" of our conferences, call me up and ask me, "Is there any way I can help with your next conference?" It pleases me to see them following the Lord, eager to serve, eager to participate in youth work with the next generation.

Jennifer Nataf



"It pleases me to see them following the Lord."

"Who Am I?"

Workshop for Teenage Girls

It is a truth universally acknowledged that one of the most important – and challenging – tasks of the teen years is learning to fit in with peers. For Messianic youth in Israel, this is compounded by the fact that their peers, average Israeli teenagers, don't know much (if anything) about the Messianic faith. Israeli teens are conscious of the existence of Christianity, as they are of all other major religions. However, like the rest of the Israeli population, the concept of Jews actually believing in Jesus is foreign to most of them. Revealing this faith to others can be extremely intimidating for Messianic teens. Some Messianic teenagers are brave enough to share their faith with close friends, classmates, or teachers. Many others are so intimidated by the potential societal backlash and fear of ostracism that they hide their faith. These teens then find themselves having to make excuses for the values they espouse because of their faith and live in constant fear of being "found out." We recently had the opportunity to team up with NerYah ("Candle of God"), a Jerusalem-based youth ministry supported by Hope for Israel, to organize a workshop for teen girls aged 12-18. The purpose of the seminar, entitled "Who Am I?," was to expose the lies the world sells regarding self-worth and self-image, and to focus on our identity in the Lord. Advertisers tell teens that they are not good enough, attractive enough, or popular enough without their products. TV shows and movies often teach that the way to get what we want is to compromise godly values while ignoring the devastating consequences of these actions. Omnipresent images of perfect, unattainable beauty are especially daunting and demoralizing for teenage girls still trying to fit in, still growing into their own bodies and into their own identities.

Together with the girls, we examined the messages behind a popular Israeli clothing company's television commercial. We looked at "before" and "after" photos of air-brushed images used for ads in magazines. We discussed the lies the world is trying to sell them and took a look at ourselves through the lens of God's Word.

"God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus."

The world's message is broadcast loud and clear, 24/7. As believers, we need to be vigilant in countering it with an even clearer message from God's Word, with verses such as can be found in Song of Songs 4:7: "You are altogether beautiful, my darling; there is no flaw in you," and Ephesians 2:10: "For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." We can't take ourselves out of this world, nor can we avoid its images. But we can fight them with the Word of God, with God's reassurance that he created us perfectly, that we are complete in him, and that we are beautiful to him.



Youth Book

The mission of Caspari Center is to equip believers for the work of ministry and to meet strategically important needs in the Israeli Messianic community. We are fulfilling this mission in different ways, including by printing training materials. At first our sole focus was on children's ministers, and we published a manual for children's workers as well as activity books for children of different ages. Then, a few years ago, one of our staff members had the idea of addressing the needs of youth workers as well. And this is how we ended up with the working title *Youth Book*.



This manual for youth workers will be published by Caspari within a few months. Our authors are respected local pastors, youth leaders, and other ministers; they wrote about a dozen articles on various subjects of vital importance to youth ministry. The need for such a book has to do with the lack of formal theological or ministerial training, which is characteristic (at least for now) of many Israeli ministers in general and of most Israeli youth pastors in particular. We are confident that the quality material that we are presenting to them will have an impact and be a blessing. The book will be published in both Hebrew and Russian, and each congregation will receive at least a couple of free copies in the languages they need.

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.

Evangelism in Israel Through the Opponents' Eyes (from the Caspari Media Review)

Yediot Haifa, May 4; BeKehila, May 3, 2012

Yad L'Achim was up in arms . . . over the latest "missionary campaign" in the north: "This is the third consecutive year in which the wicked missionary campaign under the aegis of the Christian-missionary sect 'Messianic Jews' has been conducted over the summer. The campaign, which breaks forth from time to time and is supposed to continue until 2013, opened this week, and to our great misfortune for the first time ever has captured space in leading newspapers – which have given in to the money of the mission and conspicuously printed on a whole page a missionary ad for everyone to read. At the same time, many members of the mission were active throughout Haifa and the lower Galilee in an audacious attempt to bring 'that man' – God forbid – to thousands of residents in the north. . . . Groups of missionaries stood at the main junctions wearing clothes sporting a clear missionary message and holding posters carrying their false good news, according to which the individual salvation of every person will come from 'that man' (may his mouth be silenced), and calling on the masses of passersby to call a number to find out more."

Prayer Requests

Please pray for:

- **Messianic youth and all who are involved in youth ministry in Israel**
- **Completion of the youth book**
- **Strong contacts in the south of Israel, that will enable us to serve the Shabbat school teachers there**
- **Completion of the course on pastoral care for house group leaders, that will be taught by Caspari staff at the Haifa Theological Institute**
- **Development of our ministry to singles**



Living Life Without Labels

Her neighbors and relatives applied dozens of labels to her life over the years: Bad Girl. Sinner. Dangerous. Trash.

These hurtful labels burned like hot acid the first few times she'd heard them spoken about her. Those raw wounds had long ago become a protective shell made of calluses and scar tissue.

The harsh labels placed on her life by others weren't the only thing shaping the protective shell around the woman's soul. Some of her wounds were self-inflicted. Every time she'd chosen to do things her own way, each time she'd sinned, her once-tender heart became a little more like flint.

Perhaps she'd made the decisions she had about how to live because she didn't believe she had any other options. Or maybe she somehow hoped her choices would free her from having to care about the opinions of others.

In contrast to those – including herself – who'd labeled this woman throughout her life, Jesus met her at her village well in Samaria in order to recognize, then remove her labels. With perfect love and surgical precision, Jesus named her sins in order to free her from her transgressions and her shame.

After her encounter with Jesus, she left her water jar behind so she could run back to her village. Awe-struck words overflowed from her: "Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?" (John 4:29).

Her neighbors already thought they knew who she was. A stranger's words, saying the same sorts of things they'd said about her for years, transformed her. The villagers flocked to the well to meet Jesus because of this woman's jubilant report.

Labels define us, and in many cases, limit us from being able to be who God has called us to be. When I was a child, I received some harsh labels from family members about my appearance. As a Jewish girl in a predominately Gentile high school, some harsh anti-Semitic labels were applied to me. My hurt in regards to those labels led me to make some sinful moral choices, which resulted in yet more labels being applied to me.

Jesus came to remove those labels from my life one by one, just as he did for the woman at the well in John 4. I am continually learning that his love for me is stronger than even the oldest, stickiest labels I wear.

I have had the privilege of mentoring a number of young women, and I have discovered that the shame of their own labels is one of their biggest barriers to spiritual growth. I've discovered that one of the greatest gifts I can give to another person is the ability to respond like Jesus did to the labels in the person's life as I both acknowledge their existence and speak his words of truth, mercy, and forgiveness to the person. His Spirit alone has the power to remove those labels and bring freedom to each one of us.

In the Samaritan village, as the labels were removed from one outcast's life, her freedom launched a chain reaction:

Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I ever did." So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. And because of his words many more became believers.

They said to the woman, "We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world." (John 4:39-42)

Jesus has given us the honor of proclaiming that only his transforming love and mercy are strong enough to remove the labels worn by the hurting ones in our lives. May we do so with the same joy exhibited by the woman at the well after Jesus removed her labels and freed her to follow him!

Michelle Van Loon



**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.**