



# Caspari Center NEWS

March 2012



Equipping  
the next generation  
of Jewish believers  
in Jesus



**What a joy to  
be part of the  
extreme makeover  
process that the work  
of the Holy Spirit  
is doing**

## **Israel Office:**

55 HaNevi'im St., PO Box 46  
Jerusalem 91000, Israel  
Phone: +972 2-6233926  
Fax: +972 2-6251933  
Email: [Caspari@caspari.com](mailto:Caspari@caspari.com)

## **U.S. Office:**

PO Box 147  
Wheaton,  
IL 60187 USA  
Phone +1 630-668-3328  
Fax: +1 630-668-6473  
Email: [CaspariUSA@caspari.com](mailto:CaspariUSA@caspari.com)

[www.caspari.com](http://www.caspari.com)

## **Extreme Makeover**

I love watching transformation take place. I've always enjoyed watching TV shows like *Extreme Home Makeover* where you see houses and properties getting huge makeovers. Transformation means a marked change, as in appearance or character, usually for the better. Whether a renovation of a house, a thorough spring cleaning, a great new hairstyle or wardrobe, old habits replaced by healthier ones, or simply a personal revelation that changes my own perceptions, I welcome a great makeover. However, there is nothing more exciting than watching an individual being transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit as they begin their journey with God through a relationship with Yeshua HaMashiach. To be a part of that amazing transformation process makes all other transformations pale in comparison. When the Holy Spirit begins to move in the life of the humble heart, change is inevitable and the result is a new creation. It is like undergoing a spiritual makeover!

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! (2 Cor. 5:17, NIV)

But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit. (2 Cor. 3:18 NASB)

At Caspari Center we have the privilege of participating in that change process. Through our programs, events, seminars, and resources we are able to support, equip, and disciple the Messianic believers in Yeshua on that journey.

That leads me to the real purpose behind this article, to introduce a project that has been in the transformation process for quite some time – *our new website*. Yes we have undergone an Extreme Website Makeover. After many months of planning and work by our dedicated staff, volunteers, and web gurus, we are pleased to introduce our new and improved Caspari Center website, still located at the same address: [www.caspari.com](http://www.caspari.com). Please feel free to "surf our site" and let us know what you think. We have improved our look and our pages with ways of keeping you informed on current events, programs, projects, and all the resources Caspari has available. We've improved our subscription page, where you can quickly subscribe to a number of different publications we offer. You can purchase from our online store with your credit card or PayPal account, and donate to our general fund or specific projects you are excited about. You can also access archives of our past newsletters, articles, and audio recordings.



One way in which we are keeping our readers more informed is our new featured articles

slideshow. On a regular basis we will be adding new articles of interest to keep you informed and up-to-date on the Messianic movement in Israel and what we are up to at Caspari Center. In the course of the coming months we will add new features to the website, including a Hebrew language site and the new online library system which will allow registered users to access our library with a click of the mouse. Enjoy easy access to our database of books, journals, and audio recordings.

Thanks so much for being a vital part of the ministry of Caspari Center. Your support, prayers, and encouragement keep God-transformations happening in Israel. What a joy to be part of the extreme makeover process that the work of the Holy Spirit is doing in the lives of Israelis.

Enjoy browsing our site!

Heidi Maskell

*Heidi Maskell is a volunteer from Canada who is spending a year with us while her husband is studying in Jerusalem. She has been helping with the website development process as well as contributing her skills in many other ways here at Caspari.*



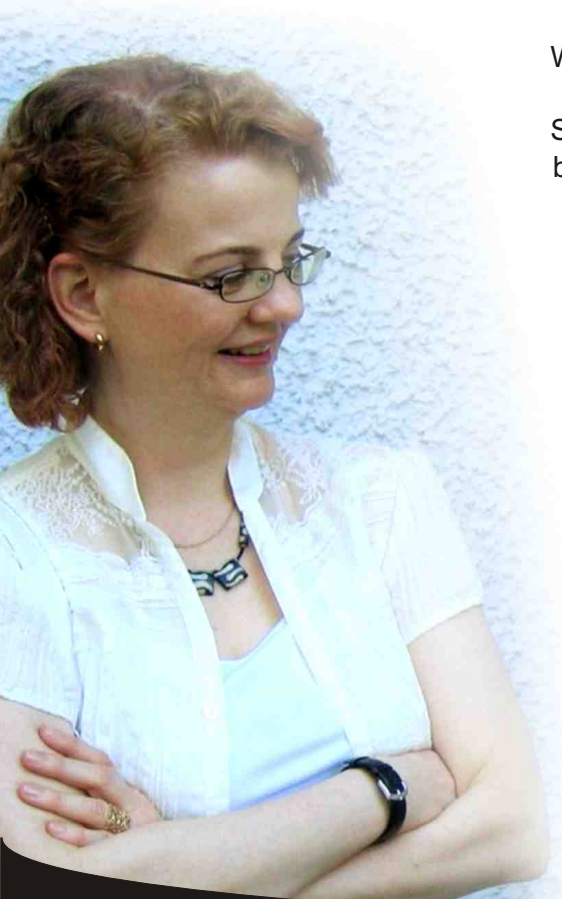
## From African Childhood to Israeli Present

We warmly welcome Sanna Erelä from Finland to our staff in Jerusalem!

Sanna has studied music and most recently theology, and has degrees in both. At Caspari she will take part in developing the international study programs and work with our volunteers. But first, she will get acquainted with the Hebrew language and take time to settle into the Middle-Eastern lifestyle, which differs quite a bit from that of her native Finland. Though this is her first time living in Israel, Sanna has firsthand experience living in another culture: she spent several years of her childhood in Kenya, where her parents worked.

Raised in a Christian family, she has always understood from the Bible the importance of bringing the Good News to all the world. At the age of 13, Sanna spent a holiday in Israel with her family, on their way from Africa to Finland. That was a very pleasant time, and she found the country interesting – but other than that Israel had no special role in her thoughts. Her grandparents, though, were devoted friends of Israel and the Jewish people, and they planted seeds of love in Sanna's heart.

For many years Sanna felt she wanted to establish her life in Finland, and had no interest in living abroad.





But God had other plans for her. A few years ago she found herself in a time of deep theological and spiritual pondering. The idea of God having a chosen people was very difficult to accept. How could one nation have a special status over others? How could God favor certain people? Sanna found it almost unbearably unfair that based solely on her birth and non-Jewish origin, she was irreversibly an "outsider." The key to the answer came from the classic text of Romans 9–11. Sanna recalls: "I was especially struck by the words 'for your sake' (Rom. 11:28). I understood that, yes, God loves the Jewish people greatly, and in the same way he also loves me! I didn't feel envious anymore, and all the bitterness melted away!" The people, the land, the history, God's selection – it was all needed for the sake of God's saving plan for the world. God's faithful love for his people really spoke to Sanna. "This is our God! Faithful and not forsaking. He hasn't abandoned the Jewish people, even after all this time. In exactly the same way, I can trust that he won't give up on me!" Sanna rejoices.

This revelation gave life to the seeds planted by her grandparents. While finishing her theological studies, Sanna prayed for direction for her life. The Jewish people, and work somehow connected to them, continually came to mind. She found Caspari's website, and our vision and goal resonated with her even before an opportunity opened up for her to serve in the ministry. For Sanna, the Jewish roots of her faith are an essential tool in understanding God's plan and reading the Bible. She finds it crucial to teach Christians about the origins of their faith. "I've come to understand that God choosing the Jewish people is not about favoring them, but wanting through this nation to show his amazing love to me and to all the world! We as Christians have a great debt to the Jewish people."

## 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 <http://www.caspari.com/new/en/getinvolved/subscribe>**

**Archaeology continues to shed light on the Jewish background of Jesus and his earliest followers. The Media Review included this article from Israel HaYom, Haaretz, and HaModia relating to the discovery of a very interesting little artifact used to certify the purity of items entering the Temple Mount.**

**Israel HaYom, Haaretz, and HaModia** (all December 26) reported the discovery of a rare Second Temple period cartouche (seal) – the first of its kind to be found – which attests to the activity in the Temple, being inscribed in Aramaic with the words "It is pure" together with a two-letter abbreviation for the name of God. The seal was discovered near Robinson's Arch; archeologists say the soil layer above the Herodian road where it was found dates to the first century BCE. "Archaeologist Eli Shukron of the Antiquities Authority, and Professor Ronny Reich of Haifa University, who oversaw the excavation, explained to reporters the significance of the coin. 'This is the first time an object of this kind has been found. It is direct archaeological evidence of Jewish activity on the Temple Mount during the Second Temple era. Products being brought to the temple had to be stamped "pure" – which is what this seal was used for.'"

## Prayer Requests

- **We pray for a strengthened and renewed spirit of reconciliation and unity between Jewish and Arab believers in Jesus in Israel.**
- **We pray that the Lord will change the hearts of those who hate the name of Yeshua and protect his followers when they are harassed and attacked by extremists.**
- **We pray for the upcoming Shabbat school seminar for Russian speakers and for the singles' gathering in March.**
- **We praise God for answering all our current visa needs and gathering a full staff to our Jerusalem center.**
- **We pray for our new website, launched in March, to be a useful tool in communicating our ministry, reaching new audiences, and getting people involved with work among Jewish people.**
- **We give thanks for the plenteous amount of rain received in Israel this winter. We pray that God will pour down spiritual blessings and open people's hearts to his salvation.**

# The Ultimate Treasure

*The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.*  
(Matt. 13:44–46, NIV)

This pair of parables highlights the same truth from two different angles: A dedicated seeker will give everything he owns to possess the ultimate treasure.

You can almost imagine the stunned surprise of a person who has stumbled across buried treasure in a vacant plot of land. The treasure is perhaps worth more than he could earn in a lifetime. He quickly re-buries the loot, then rushes to sell his stuff in order to buy the land so he will become the rightful owner of the hidden cache.

The second parable offers a different look at the same spiritual reality. In this story, a veteran jewel buyer is barely able to contain his awe at the find of a single oversized, flawless pearl. The arc of this story is a carbon copy of that of the treasure-finder. The jeweler sells his entire inventory in order to possess this once-in-a-lifetime discovery.

Jesus told these stories at the peak of his ministry, to crowds who were, for the most part, receptive to his words. They were ready to listen to whatever he had to say.

Or were they?

Jesus was telling them that they would need to trade everything they held dear in order to find their true treasure in his invisible kingdom. This is as difficult for us to comprehend as it was for Jesus' first-century audience. In our culture of shattered promises and litigious hair-splitting, committing everything to possess the One Thing that matters more than anything else in the whole world seems impossible. Most of us naturally want to ensure that a risk like that will pay off in the end.

One of our young adult sons recently visited Israel. He was surprised by the spiritual intensity he sensed as he traveled the land. The longings of pilgrims who've traveled there from around the world mix with the faith practices of those living in Israel. Even committed secularists in Israel can't ignore the fact that they live in a place like no other on earth, where the hopes and prayers of three major religions converge.

Jesus well understood both our spiritual longings and our inability to commit to do what he was asking in these parables – to fully pursue God.

So he did for us what we could not do for ourselves. He was born into the place and of the people that were chosen by God to proclaim his goodness to every tongue, tribe, and nation. In Bethlehem, Israel, 2,000 years ago, God himself came to find each one of us.

We are his treasure, his perfect pearl. He gave everything to possess us.

These parables, then, are a holy invitation to respond to what he has already done for us. As we join him in his mission, he empowers us by his Spirit to live as spiritual treasure hunters.

Who, then, are the buried treasures, the perfect pearls in your life?

Michelle Van Loon

***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.***