



Caspari Center NEWS

December 2016



From the CEO

Elisabeth E. Levy

Dear Partners and Supporters of the Caspari Center

Winter is approaching here in Israel after a long and warm summer. In December, two important holidays will take place: Hanukkah and Christmas. You can read about them in one of the articles in this newsletter. Both holidays are celebrations of light. We are praying to God Almighty that he might let his light shine in our life, and that the darkness might be chased away.

The first event at Caspari Center after the summer holiday was the Open Library, with a lot of books on sale. And for the first time Caspari hosted a fundraising seminar. You can read about both in this newsletter.

We at the Caspari Center want to wish you all a happy Hanukkah, merry Christmas, and happy New Year 2017, each according to his or her choice and tradition.

We are entering the year 2017 with full confidence in God, who we trust is entering this new year with us. Thank you for all your prayers and support during 2016; without you we couldn't do our ongoing work among the Jewish people. We trust you will continue to stand with us in 2017. Your prayers and donations are, as always, heartily appreciated.

The Month of Hanukkah and Christmas

This year (2016/5777) Hanukkah and Christmas fall on the same day. December 25 is Christmas Day, and also the first day of Hanukkah. So the question is, Do these two holidays have anything in common? Although the two holidays have completely different backgrounds, they are both "festivals of light." Both are celebrating that the light triumphed over the dark, and the good over the evil. In John 10:22 we read: "It was winter, and the festival of the Dedication was being held in Jerusalem." From this verse in John we learn that Jesus was in Jerusalem, in the temple, for the feast of Hanukkah. Hanukkah commemorated the cleansing of the temple under Yehuda Maccabeus in 164 BC. Antiochus Epiphanes had defiled it by sacrificing a pig on the altar of burnt offering. According to the Jewish calendar, the festival falls in November/December, when it is wintertime in Israel.

We can read about the story of Hanukkah and the Maccabees in the second book of Maccabees: "They decided by public edict, ratified by vote, that the whole nation of the Jews should observe these days every year." (2 Macc 10:8) The temple was rededicated by the Maccabees on the 25th of the month of Kislev in 164 BC, after being desecrated for three years. The Maccabees had revolted against the enforced Hellenization of the Jewish people. The Hellenistic culture was a formidable challenge to Judaism and the Jewish people. The Maccabean fighters would rather give up their lives than deny the God of Israel, and saved Judaism from extinction at a crucial time. So the Hanukkah story is a story about the temple, the center of Judaism.

Very important things happened between the Old and New Testaments, and the story of Hanukkah is one of them. The great historical drama which took place in the 160s BC is also essential for understanding the origin of the Jesus movement and the early church. The Hanukiah, the eight-armed candlestick, is the symbol of Hanukkah. Each evening for eight days one light is lit. During Hanukkah, the people asked Jesus how long he would keep them in suspense about who he is. The people were wondering if he could be the Messiah, the Light which was promised to the world. In the beginning of the Gospel of John we read: "In him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it."

Both Christmas and Hanukkah are festivals of light during a dark winter month. Hanukkah commemorates the dedication of the temple in Jerusalem, and Christmas commemorates he who is greater than the temple and who gives light to all humankind—not only for eight days, but for this life and beyond.

"IT'S ALL ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS"

Marja-Liisa Söderqvist
/ CC staff member



For more information, go to www.bgwdevelopment.com



Caspari Center hosted a seminar on fundraising within its premises at the beginning of November. At the two-day seminar, more or less 16 participants were introduced to key development topics to help their non-profit organization achieve its funding goals. The seminar was led by Jerry Twombly, the founder and executive director of Development Marketing Associates (DMA), an international consulting group committed to assisting churches, colleges, evangelical ministries, and Christian elementary and secondary schools in areas relating to organizational development.

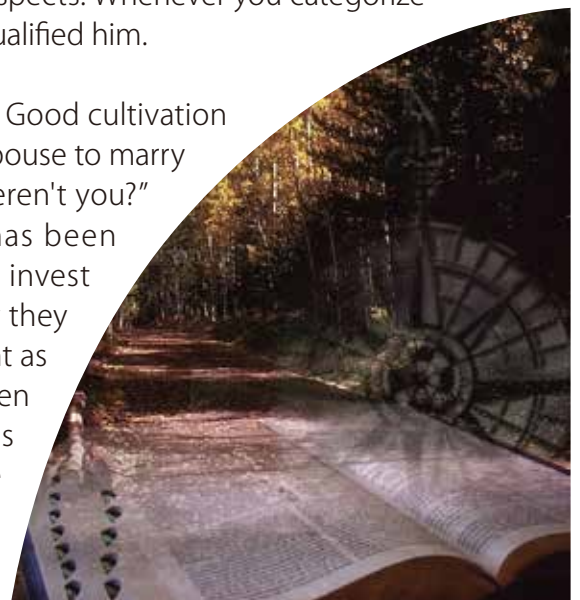
Jerry Twombly is a visionary from Indianapolis who has spent 45 years in the practice of organizational development. During that time he has provided professional counsel to over 3 500 organizations throughout the US and in over 50 countries around the world. Known throughout the world as "the architect of relational development", this graduate of Miami Bible College and Grace Theological Seminary has never seen himself as a fundraiser. "Development is all about relationships", says Twombly.

Most would say that development is fundraising. Twombly teaches that development is the things we do to build sustainable, long-term relationships with people. And that successful fundraising is not a focus but a cause, a consequence of building healthy and biblical, God-honouring organisation and ministry. "To the degree that you are successful in building relationships and effectively engaging people in pursuit of your vision, you will not tend to lack for money nor will you tend to lack people who will hear you", he says.

In order to help ministries achieve their vision and funding goals, Jerry Twombly has created a five-step model upon which to build. "If you understand the philosophy of the model and build upon it, you will be successful in building relationships", he states. Twombly starts to explain his model by drawing an analogy from a relationship that develops and ends up in marriage. "The greatest analogy of development is falling in love", he says. He then discusses the critical steps of the development process by defining and simplifying them.

The first step in the process is to identify your prospects, those groups of individuals with whom you could build relationships. The potential prospects are many, because every person you meet is surrounded by a group of people with whom he has influence (spouse, children, colleagues, personal friends, people at church, and a host of others). The second step in the model is to qualify your prospects. Whenever you categorize a prospect by the closeness of his association with you, you have qualified him.

The third step is cultivation, and it can be compared to courtship. Good cultivation strategies can make a positive difference. "When you asked your spouse to marry you, my guess is you were pretty assured she would say 'yes', weren't you?" goes Twombly's analogy. In other terms, when cultivation has been successful, solicitation will be successful. "I never ask people to invest (time, energy, finances) in an organization I represent until I know they are ready", he continues. Sustaining the relationship is as important as building it. A sustainable, long-term relationship is being built, when a transition from an emotional relationship to a rational one has occurred. The important thing is to pursue the relationship for the right reasons. Growing ministries and accomplishing what God has placed in our hearts to do takes place through communication, involvement and appreciation, one relationship at a time.



Interfaith Dialogue

Haaretz | October 23, 2016

The Samaritan high priest, Abdullah Wasef Tawfiq, received a group of Palestinians this week for Sukkot, followed by Jewish visitors as well. One of the oldest minorities in the world, the Samaritans nevertheless manage to successfully straddle the Arab-Israeli conflict most of the time, and both Palestinians and Jews feel comfortable with them. Samaritans carry both Israeli and Palestinian ID cards, giving them more access to the country than most people, but this can occasionally be a burden, as Palestinians can sometimes mistake them for Jews, and Jews can mistake them for Palestinians.

Open Library

Maria / Librarian

Normally the Caspari library is a fairly quiet place, but on the evening of September 13 there was laughter, people, and food in the library. And of course a lot of books.

During the past year or so, the library has received several donations of used books. While many of the books have found their way to the shelves of our library, we still ended up with several hundred “extra” books. Some of the books we already had in the library, and some of them were not relevant for us. After some consideration we decided to have an “Open Library” evening where we would (hopefully) sell the excess books and make our library known to possible new library users. Even the evening’s Open Lecture was about books, on the topic “What do we read?”

The “Open Library” was a small success. We didn’t have as many people as we had hoped for, but we did sell a number of books, and the people had a good time going through the books, getting to know our library, and enjoying fellowship with one another. And we had several people ask if this would be an annual event. We’ll see . . . if we get more book donations.



MINISTRY UPDATE

New Volunteers

Marja-Liisa Söderqvist

/ CC staff member



Caspari Center has always relied on our wonderful volunteers, and we’d like to take this opportunity to introduce the current ones. Martha and Hiromi are a young couple in their thirties from Tokyo, Japan. After reading the email updates of a Japanese organization called “A Bridge between Zion and Japan” (BZJ), they became interested in meeting Messianic Jews and experiencing life in Israel. BZJ seeks to connect the people of Japan with Israel in several areas, including news, faith, people, and funding. It also supports the work of Caspari Center. Martha, a graphic designer, and Hiromi, a news writer, have been volunteering at Caspari since September and will stay until July 2017.

Daniel comes from Ålesund, Norway. He wanted to do something different after school and applied for a volunteer position in Israel, as the land is a special place. Daniel’s interest lies in the field of media, and he has already recorded some excellent video footage for Caspari. He will be volunteering with us until June 2017.



SIMPLY THE STORY

with Bill Bjoraker

Join us for a Bible storytelling workshop titled “Simply The Story: Oral Inductive Bible Study.” Learn to tell engaging Bible stories and lead interactive discussions for outreach, discipleship, small groups, or devotions!

Where?

Caspari Center in Jerusalem

When?

February 14-16

(Practitioner workshop)

February 12-16

(Practitioner and Trainer workshop)

▶ For more information, or to register, contact Jennifer at caspari@caspari.com

Torn Garments and Burst Wineskins

Michelle Van Loon
/ US Administrator



Then John's disciples came and asked him, "How is it that we and the Pharisees fast often, but your disciples do not fast?" Jesus answered, "How can the guests of the bridegroom mourn while he is with them? The time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; then they will fast. "No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, for the patch will pull away from the garment, making the tear worse. Neither do people pour new wine into old wineskins. If they do, the skins will burst; the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved." (Matt 9:14–17)

For any who wished to demonstrate their willingness to turn from their sin and return to God, John strode into the Jordan River and called those ready to wash their old lives away into the water. John, Yochanan in Hebrew, was a sign and a wonder, burning unconsumed in the wilderness. Yochanan fearlessly confronted religious elites and political power brokers alike, naming their sins against God. He lived as though he knew he'd been given only a small window of time in which to proclaim the word of the Lord. Those attracted to Yochanan's message of repentance adopted his ascetic lifestyle of extreme simplicity.

After he immersed his cousin Yeshua in the dark waters of the river, something in the heavens seemed to shift. It was not a surprise to anyone when Yochanan was arrested by Herod Antipas and hauled off to jail. Yochanan's disciples noticed the way Yeshua and his followers indulged in all manner of rich meals and parties. It was as though Yeshua missed the main point of his cousin's preaching. A group of them confronted Yeshua. "We fast. The Pharisees fast," they began. "Why don't your followers do likewise?" Yeshua's answer showed them the purpose of his ministry and offered them a glimpse of who he really was. Fasting, he told them, would not be a way to show off one's self-righteousness as the Pharisees believed, nor would it be the preparatory discipline in which Yochanan's disciples had engaged. Instead, Yeshua's disciples would fast out of the same kind of deep, anguished longing a bride has as she waits for her wedding day to come, and her groom has been delayed.

Jesus knew his words wouldn't make sense to those whose lives were fossilized around old ways of thinking, doing, and being. He used the everyday images of patched old garments and skins containing aged wine to show them how incompatible his new paradigm was with the old. He explained that forcing the new onto the old would do violence to both: Patching an aged garment with a piece of new, unshrunk cloth would destroy the garment; the fermentation of new wine would rupture an old, shrunken wineskin. Yeshua is not bashing the old here. Aged garments need repair. Aged wine offers mellow flavor. But he is telling Yochanan's followers—and each one of us—that he is doing something that goes far beyond what their old structures will be able to contain. We see powerful evidence of new wine at work on the first Shavuot (Pentecost), when those witnessing the explosive testimony of Yeshua's Spirit-baptized followers accused them of being intoxicated (Acts 2:13). The new community of called-out ones, the church, were the only ones able to receive and pour out the good news of Yeshua to those around them.

As we step into 2017, may our lives be vessels that are able to receive, contain, and pour out on a thirsty world the new life of Yeshua.

Prayer Requests Please pray for...

- the upcoming Shabbat school seminars in Netanya and Haifa
- the next issue of our journal Mishkan
- the ongoing work on a Messianic Liturgy
- a blessed Christmas/Hanukkah in Israel and around the world



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

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.